MOYOCO ANNO
SAKURAN

安野モヨコ

MOYOCO ANNO

VERTICAL.

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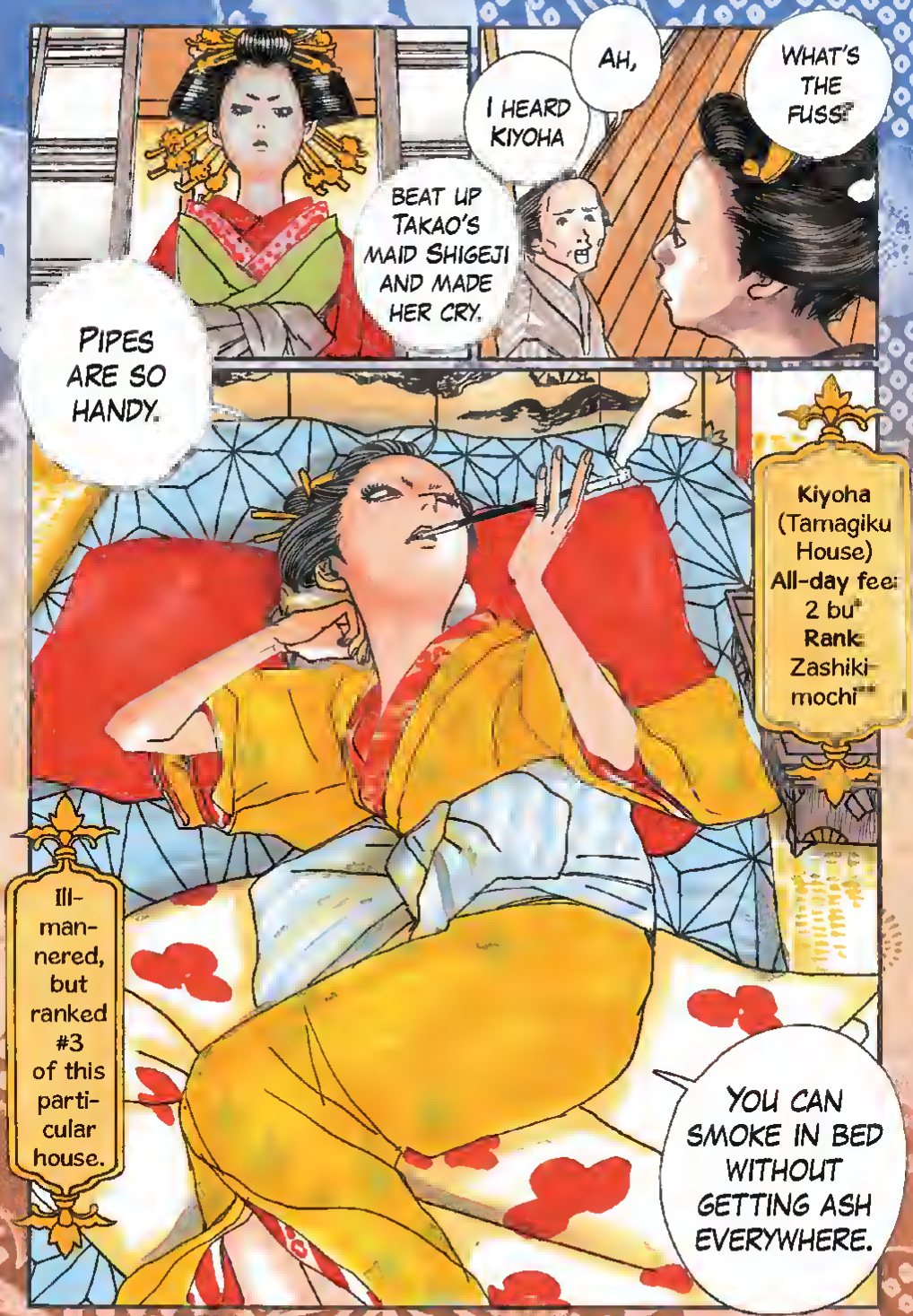
AH, OIRAN!
NO!!
NO! MY SISTER'S PRETTIEST!
MY BIG SISTER IS THE PRETTIEST!
HI, OIRAN!
むんず
SHUT. UP.

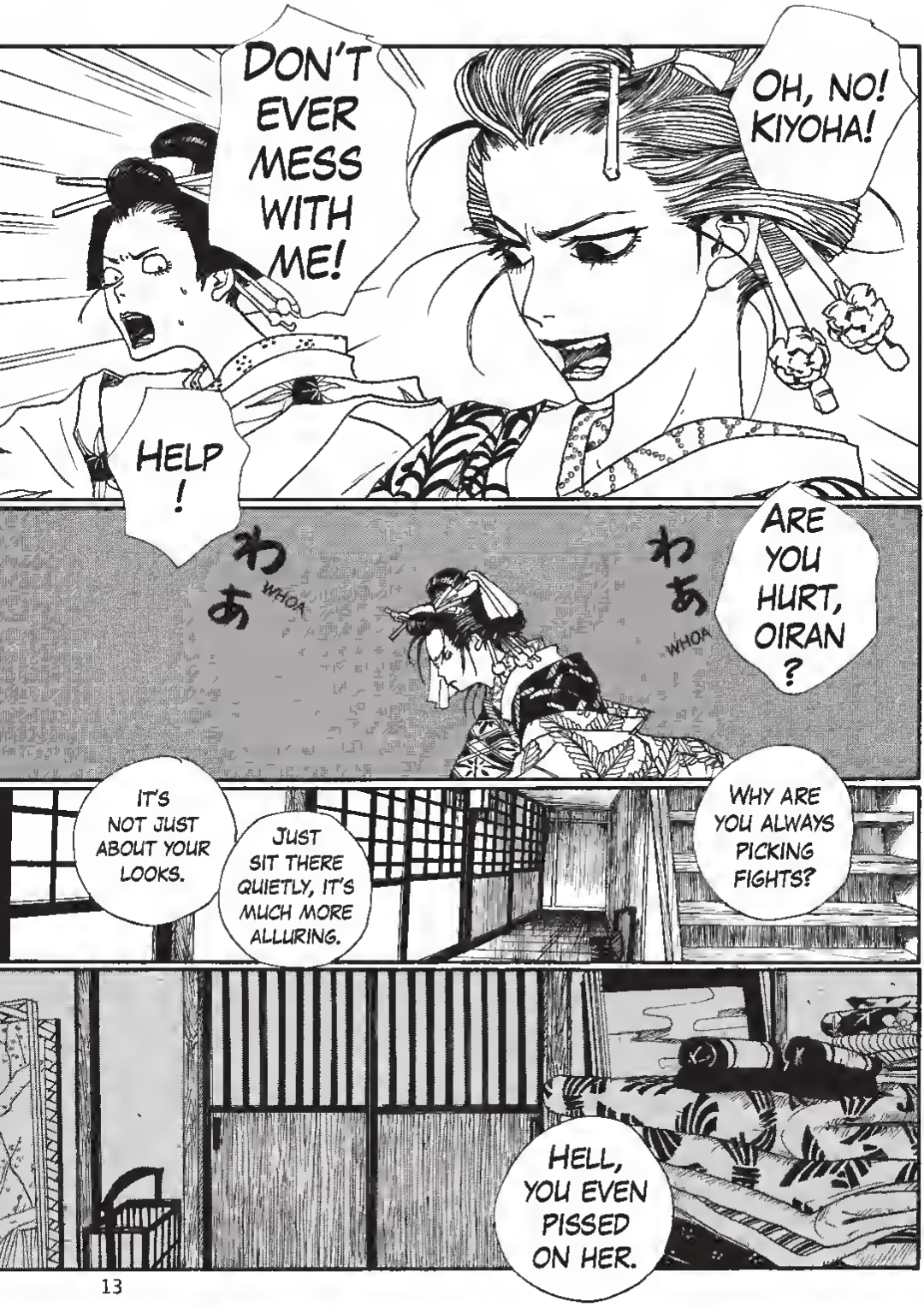
OIRAN
1
SAKURAN


WHAT'S THE FUSS?
AH,
I HEARD KIYOHA BEAT UP TAKAO'S MAID SHIGEJI AND MADE HER CRY.
PIPES ARE SO HANDY.
Kiyoha (Tamagiku House)
All-day fee: 2 bu*
Rank: Zashiki-mochi**
Ill-mannered, but ranked #3 of this particular house.
YOU CAN SMOKE IN BED WITHOUT GETTING ASH EVERYWHERE.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU CAN'T JUST BARGE IN.
WHO D'YA THINK YOU ARE?
AND WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING
BY DEFYING ME AT EVERY TURN?
きゅっ
TWIST
OW!
I'M NOT DEFYING YOU. I JUST CAN'T STAND YOU.
OR THAT
LITTLE BRAT.
ぱしっ
KLAK

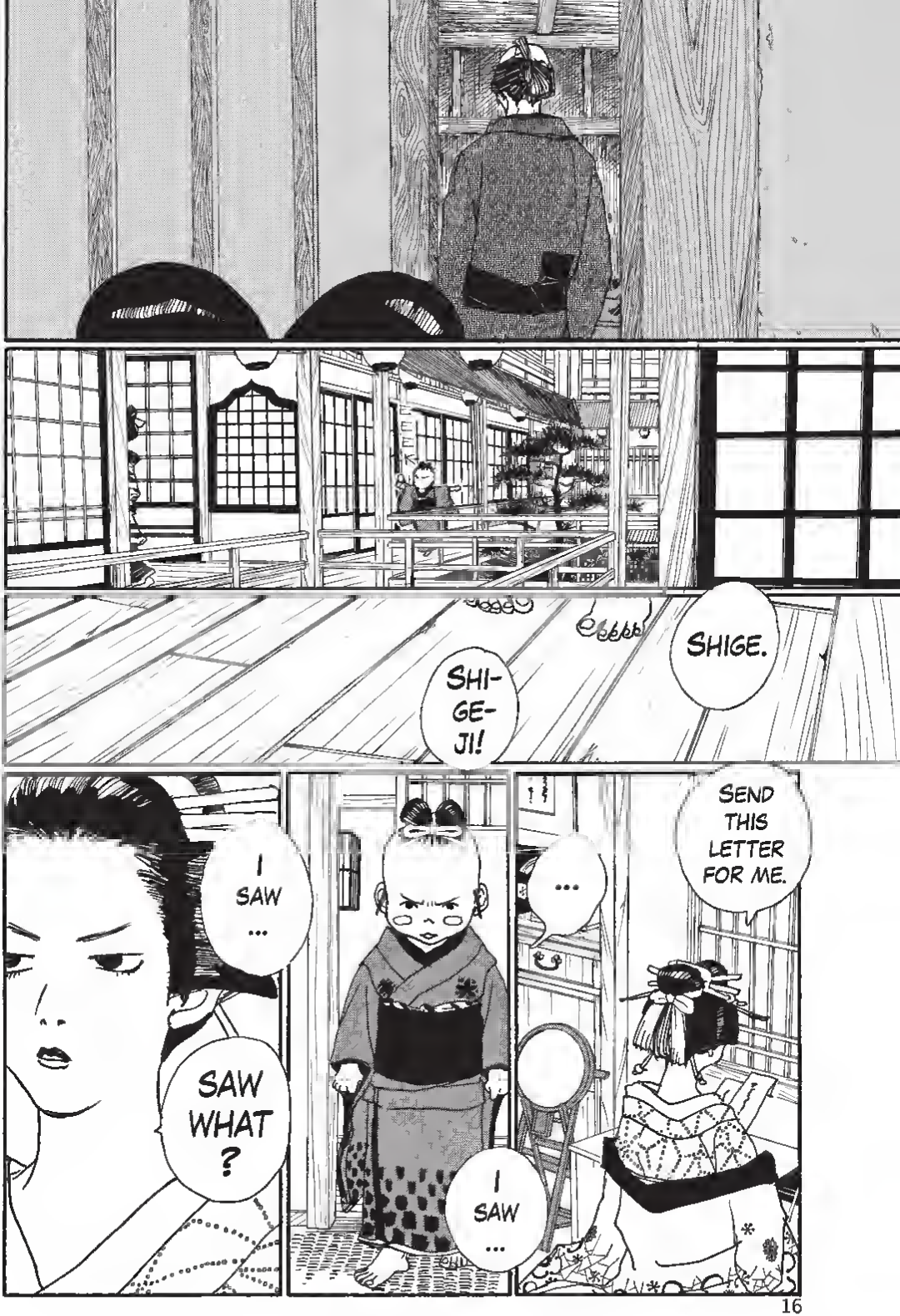
PICK ME... PICK ME...
AH, HERE HE COMES...
TSK.
HEY.
DID YOU KNOW HE'S OIRAN'S LOVER?
HE'S AN UKIYOE ARTIST. A REAL GLOOMY TYPE.
I HEARD SHE EVEN SUPPORTS HIM.
RIGHT UNDER THAT OLD BAG OF A CHAPERONE'S NOSE, EH?
KIYOHA!

SHE'S LEFT TO IDLE.
IT MUST GET LONE-SOME.
WHAT.
STOP CHATTERING AND MAKE YOURSELF AGREE-ABLE.
YOU'RE FAR TOO CHOOSY WITH YOUR CUS-TOMERS.


DON'T EVER MESS WITH ME!
OH, NO! KIYOHA!
HELP!
わあ
WHOA
わあ
WHOA
ARE YOU HURT, OIRAN?
IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT YOUR LOOKS.
JUST SIT THERE QUIETLY, IT'S MUCH MORE ALLURING.
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS PICKING FIGHTS?
HELL, YOU EVEN PISSED ON HER.

WHAT BOTHERS YOU SO MUCH,
KIYOHA ?
YOU'LL BE KICKED OUT IF YOU DO IT AGAIN.
YOU'LL END UP A 2-SHU HARLOT WORKING THE RIVER-BANK.
THE PLEASURE QUARTERS ARE PURE HELL.
HA HA... HA HA...
I ACTUALLY LIKE.
THERE'S NOT A SINGLE THING HERE

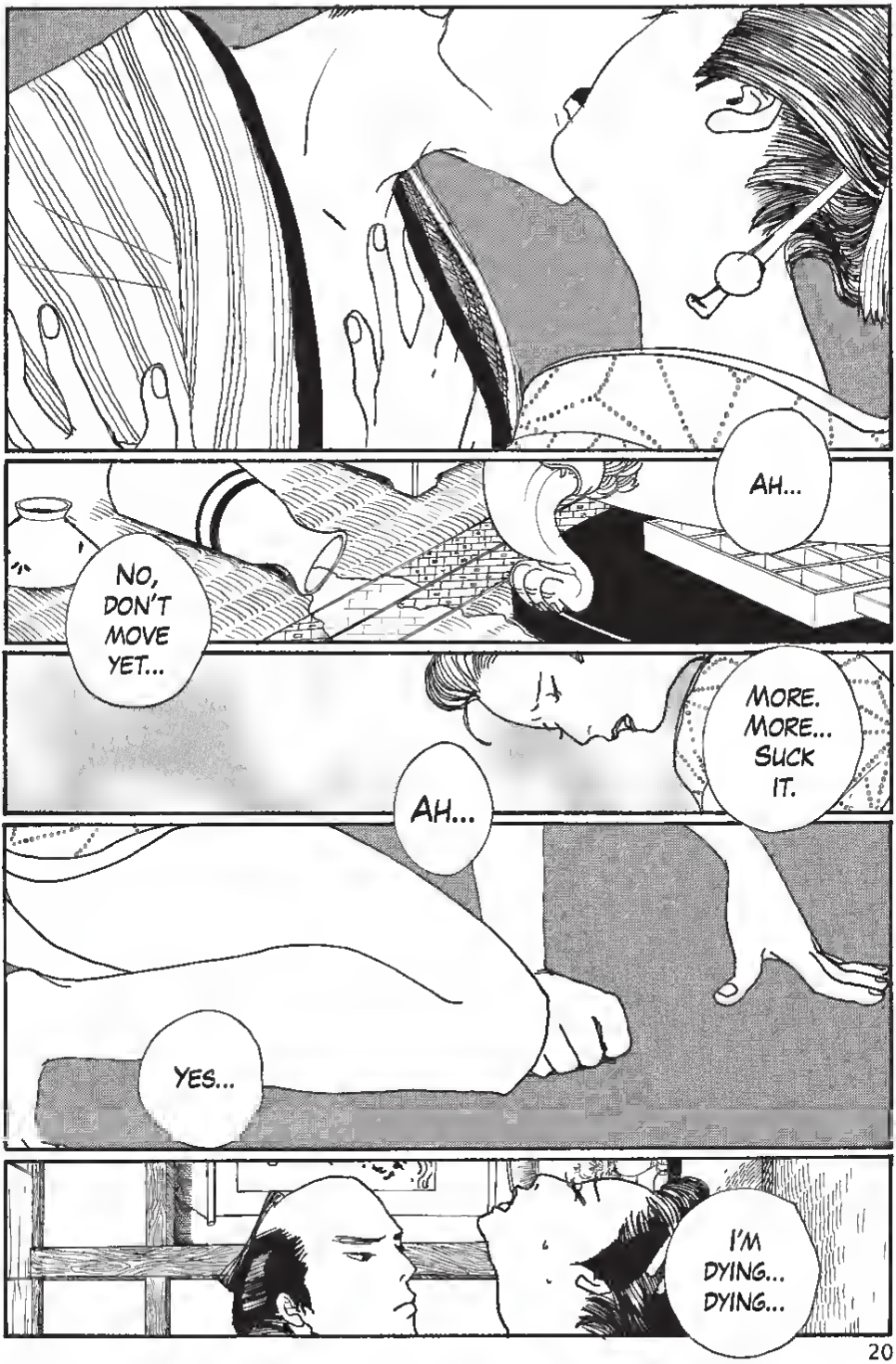
ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE?
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU LIKE?
SEIJI.
HM?
RESERVE SUCH TRICKS FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS.


SHIGE.
SHI-
GE-
JI!
SEND
THIS
LETTER
FOR ME.
...
I
SAW
...
SAW
WHAT
?
I
SAW
...

Don't tell anyone. There'll be a time to use that info.
It's quite a feat to find a chink in her armor.
Okay!
Bravo
with her toes.
Kiyoha was rubbing Clerk Seiji's thingie
Oiran.
Yes ma'am!
Run along with this.

IS KIYOHA THE ONE WITH THE FIERCE GAZE?
YES, THAT'S HER...
THE ONE YOU FOUGHT WITH?
WHEN I PASSED BY THE FRONT,
SHE STARED RIGHT AT ME WITH THOSE EYES.
HER GAZE GAVE ME THE CHILLS.
GRIP
きゅう
OW!

MITSU!
SHE'S PRETTY AND SPIRITED.
NOT SO FAST.
UNLIKE YOU, WHO HAD TO RELY ON WILES AND TRICKS
YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME JEALOUS? HOW BOORISH.
DON'T SAY SUCH MEAN THINGS!
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I CARE ABOUT YOU.
WHY DON'T YOU BELIEVE ME?
I'VE HAD DOZENS OF MEN, BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I'VE LOVED...


AH...
NO, DON'T MOVE YET...
MORE. MORE... SUCK IT.
AH...
YES...
I'M DYING... DYING...

I'LL... KILL YOU, THEN MYSELF...
THAT'S IT. THAT'S THE BEST THING...
AH! BULLY!
IT'S 10 P.M. WHAT'RE YOU DOING UP, BRAT?
WHO ARE YOU CALLING BULLY?
I'M NOT SCARED OF YOU. I GOT SOME DIRT ON YOU!
YANK
OH!

WHERE DO OIRAN GO WHEN THEY DIE?
THIS IS WHERE I'LL GO WHEN I DIE.
IT'S THE UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD!
BE AFRAID ...
SHE SAID THEY'LL DIE IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS.
AS IF HE'D DO SUCH A THING.
HE WON'T DIE WITH A WHORE!
HE'S JUST ANOTHER LECHEROUS ARTIST.

SHIGEJI! DON'T LOOK!
BASTARD. WE'LL GET HIM FOR THIS.
THE CLIENT RAN AWAY.
THIS IS BAD!
HELP!
AAH!

He killed her...
Namo ami-tabha ...
Damn him... This is awful.
Mitsunobu had other lovers. I was always suspicious of him.
Love affairs are for-bidden.
Or so he said.
Killed by the man she loved? Her soul won't find peace.

EEK.
OIRAN WAS PRETTY AND KIND AND GOOD.
WHO CARES IF A WHORE OR TWO GETS KILLED?
YOU ASS! DON'T SAY BAD THINGS ABOUT OIRAN!
OI...
ぐい
GRIP

...
RAN...
どすっ
THUD
I TOLD YOU TO KNOCK IT OFF!!
SOB
YOUR BELOVED OIRAN IS DEAD AND GONE!
...

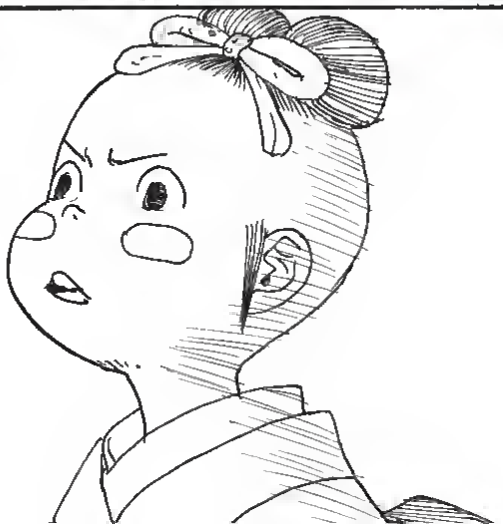
IF YOU'RE SO TORN UP ABOUT IT, BECOME ONE YOURSELF!
KIYOHA, SHE'S JUST A CHILD. STOP BEING CRUEL!
TO MAKE IT IN THE BUSINESS.
SHE MUST ALSO HAVE WILLPOWER AND PLUCK
WELL-READ AND ELEGANT.
MUST BE BEAUTIFUL, OF COURSE,
AN OIRAN, OR COURTESAN,
IT WAS FINALLY HER TURN ...
JUST WHEN SHE'D BLOSSOMED ...
SHE'D TRAINED AND TRAINED FROM MAID...
I WONDER IF WAKAGIKU CAN FILL HER SHOES.
SHE COULD WRITE POETRY, DO TEA CEREMONIES AND PLAY CHESS.
COULD NEVER RIVAL HER LIKE.
WE WHORES WHO STARTED AS ADULTS

HA HA! THEN IT'S KIYOHA!
NO WAY IN HELL.
NO THANKS.
AND NEED TO TAKE A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING LOVER?
I WOULD HAVE TO CARRY THIS TEAHOUSE ON MY SHOULDERS, AND ALL THE STRESS AND WORRY,
KIYOHA.
WAKAGIKU WAS BOUGHT OUT BY A MERCHANT. SHE'LL BE GONE SOON.

SO...?
WE NEED HIGH-RANKING OIRAN TO BE able TO COMPETE WITH OTHER HOUSES.
すっく
WHISH
YOU'RE OUR ONLY HOPE.
KIYOHA !!

SAY SOMETHING TO HER, WILL YOU?
SEIJI!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN LEAD A DOCHU PROCESSION*!
I DON'T CARE IF I'M #2 OR #3! I LIKE TO BE ABLE TO WHINE!
I LIKE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE!
THAT SIMPLY WON'T DO!
JUST PICK SOMEONE ELSE.
OI-RAN.

OIRAN!!

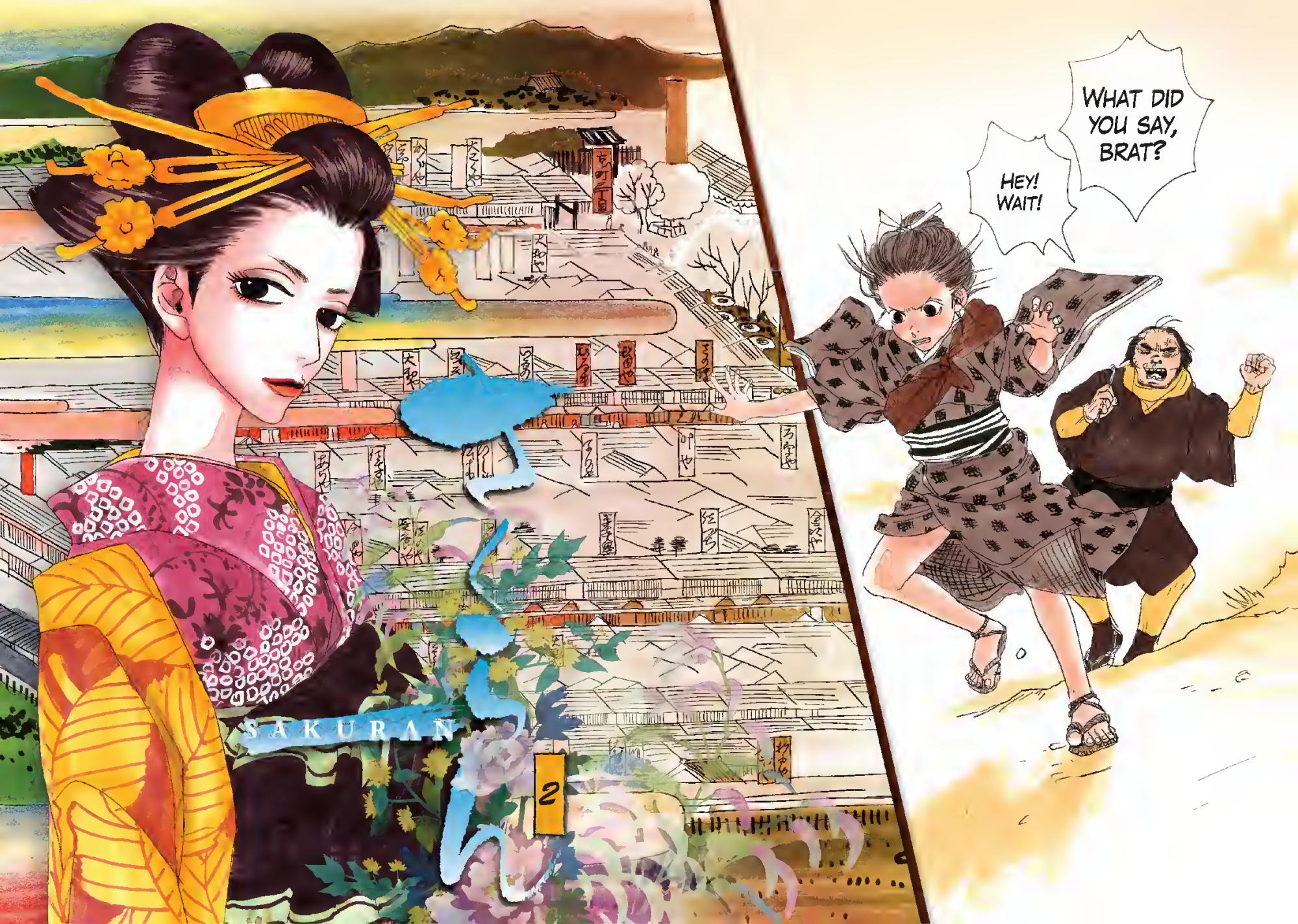


KNOCK IT OFF, I SAID!
OIRAN!
OIRAN ...!

KIYOHA IS AN OIRAN?
wa-i
OIRAN !!
OIRAN!

STOP IT!!
But at that time she was still a 2-*bu zashiki-mochi*.
She would become Higurashi of Tamagiku, the top oiran in all of Yoshiwara.
CHAPTER 1 END

IT WAS A COLD, CLEAR WINTER DAY.
IT WAS DRY, SO EVERYTHING RUSTLED. IT PISSED ME OFF.
KEEP MOVING.
HEY.
SHUT UP!
DON'T LOOK AT ME!


SAKURAN
2
HEY! WAIT!
WHAT DID YOU SAY, BRAT?

MUNCH MUNCH
MUNCH
MUNCH
SCRAPE SCRAPE
SHE'S A REAL IMPUDENT ONE.
OH?
THEY'LL MAKE HER A MAID?
IS THAT THE NEW GIRL?
TORAJI THE PIMP BROUGHT HER HERE.
HE SAYS HE BEAT HER EVERY DAY BUT SHE NEVER CRIED.

LISTEN UP.
YOU BELONG TO THE TAMAGIKU HOUSE NOW.
YOU'RE GOING TO SERVE SHOHI HERE. SHE'LL TEACH YOU MANY THINGS.
Oi-ran Sho-hi
"TOMEKI"?
YOUR NAME IS NOW TOMEKI.

じゅっ
SIZZLE
OW!
I DON'T LIKE IT.
IT'S WEIRD.
SHE WAS THE MOST POPULAR COURTESAN AT THE TIME.
MY "OLDER SISTER" WAS GORGEOUS BUT ILL-NATURED.
I DON'T NEED THIS DIRTY LITTLE TURNIP
AS MY MAID.

UGH, SHE REEKS!
MY NOSE IS GOING TO FALL OFF!
ざあ
SPLASH
SO DIRTY SHE'S NEARLY BLACK.
火え
TRYING TO MAKE A DOLLY WITH ALL THAT MUD?

I WAS SCARED OF GROWING UP TO BECOME A WOMAN IN SUCH A PLACE.
IN A WORLD OF WOMEN...
WOMAN
WOMAN
WOMAN
WOMAN
WOMAN
WOMAN
WOMAN
WOMAN
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT SUDDENLY I WAS TERRIFIED.

A MAID ESCAPED!
IT'S A NAKED DOCHU!
A MAID IN HER BIRTHDAY SUIT.

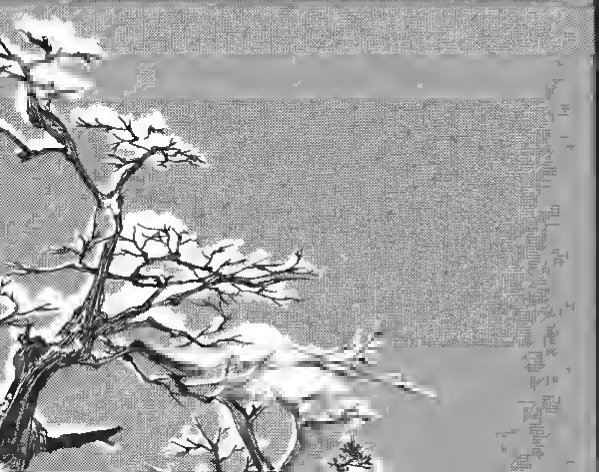
LET ME OUT!
DAMN IT!
OPEN UP!

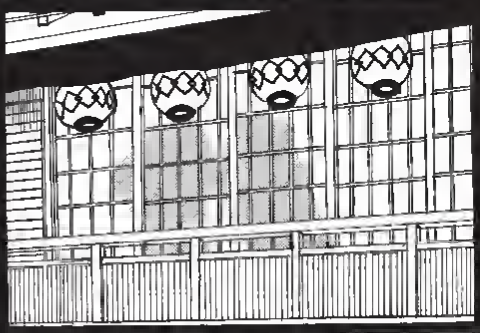
EVEN IF YOU MANAGED TO ESCAPE
YOU CAN NEVER GO THROUGH THE MAIN GATE AGAIN
びく
IT'S NOT THAT DIFFERENT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

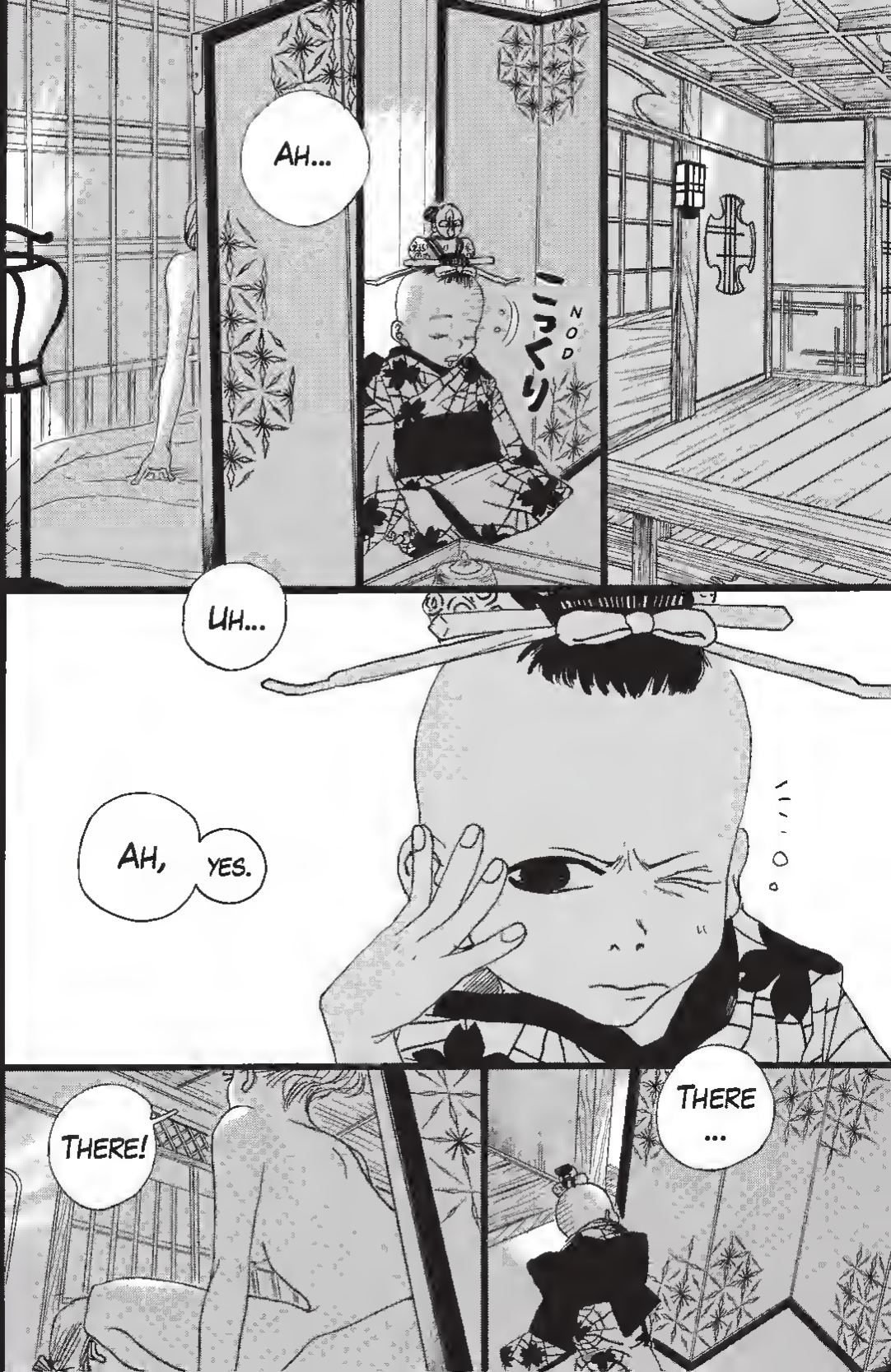
KRAK
This is the punishment in Yoshiwara. Learn it well!
Oh? You're not gonna cry?
I won't let up even if you cry.
Running away? You're just a kid!
I've never seen such a rotten little scamp!
...
They gave me this stupid haircut ...
Damn you...
I'll never forget ...

BUT THE GUARDS HAD KEEN EYES, AND I WAS SCARED OF GETTING WHIPPED. NEW YEAR'S CAME BEFORE I COULD MAKE A DECISIVE MOVE.

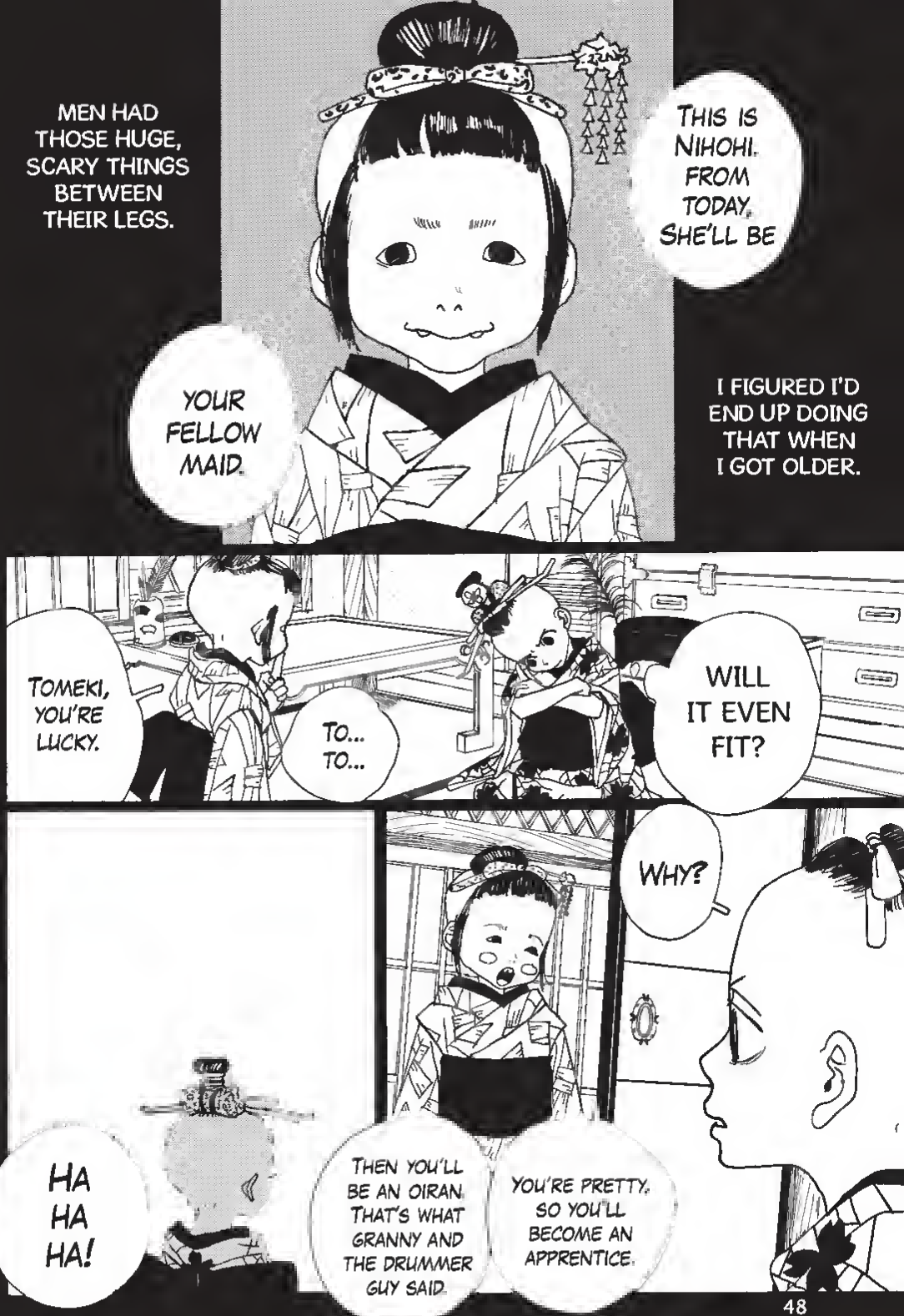
I DIDN'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO RUN TO, BUT I WAS JUST A KID. I'D MADE UP MY MIND.



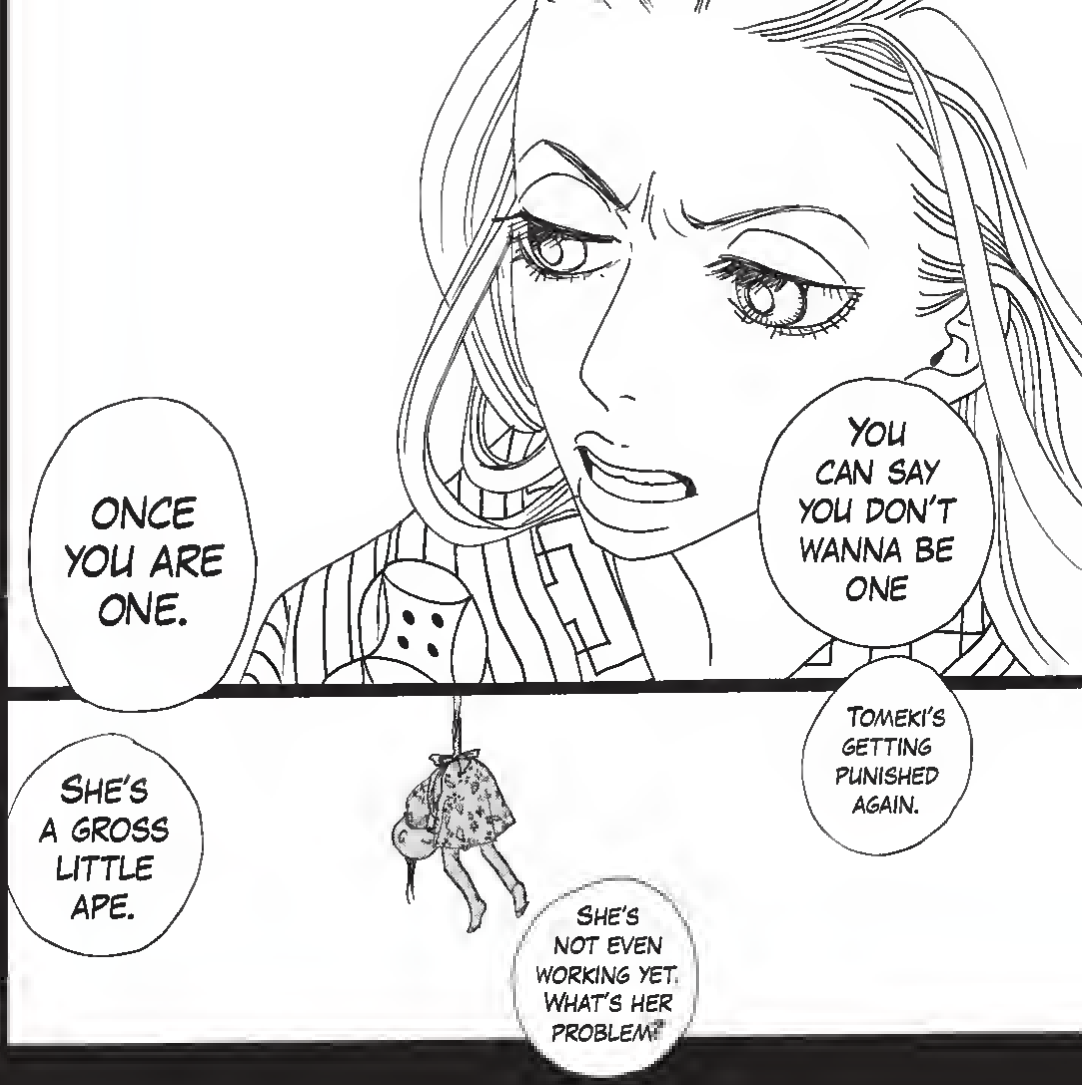



AH...
こっくり
NOD
UH...
AH, YES.
THERE!
THERE ...

NO...
IF YOU DO THAT I'LL...
...


MEN HAD THOSE HUGE, SCARY THINGS BETWEEN THEIR LEGS.
THIS IS NIHOHI. FROM TODAY, SHE'LL BE
YOUR FELLOW MAID.
I FIGURED I'D END UP DOING THAT WHEN I GOT OLDER.
TOMEKI, YOU'RE LUCKY.
TO... TO...
WILL IT EVEN FIT?
WHY?
HA HA HA!
THEN YOU'LL BE AN OIRAN. THAT'S WHAT GRANNY AND THE DRUMMER GUY SAID.
YOU'RE PRETTY. SO YOU'LL BECOME AN APPRENTICE.

I DON'T WANNA BE AN OIRAN.
HMF!
THAT'S SO ABSURD I MIGHT LAUGH MYSELF SICK.
THIS LITTLE PARSNIP? WALKING THE DOCHU?
LITTLE FOOL.
THERE ARE MANY MORE WHO WANT TO BE OIRAN AND NEVER MAKE IT.
OW.
ぎゅう
PINCH


ONCE YOU ARE ONE.
YOU CAN SAY YOU DON'T WANNA BE ONE
SHE'S A GROSS LITTLE APE.
TOMEKI'S GETTING PUNISHED AGAIN.
SHE'S NOT EVEN WORKING YET. WHAT'S HER PROBLEM?

IF I STAY HERE I'LL BECOME A SCARY OIRAN MYSELF.

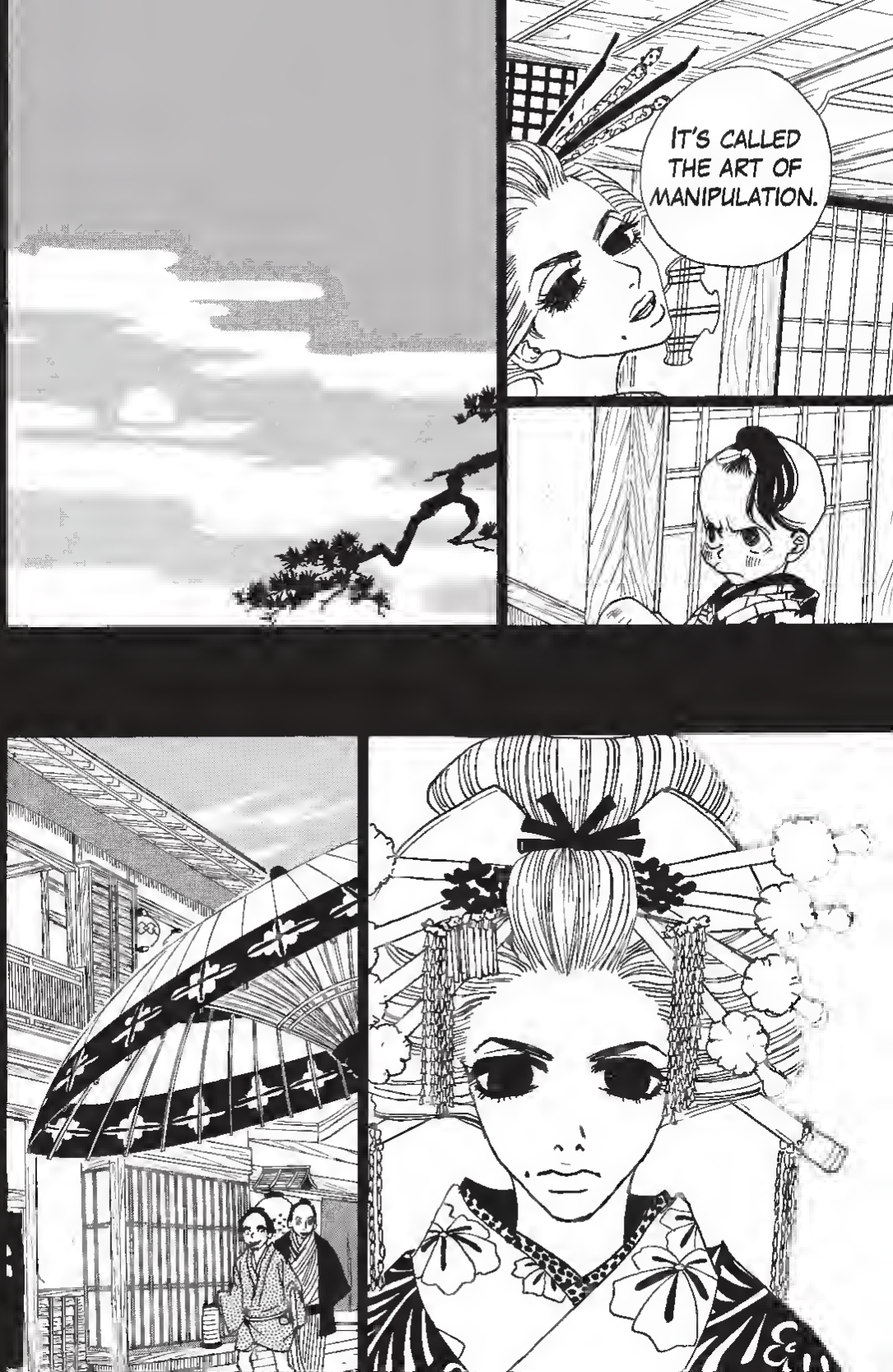
I'VE GOTTA RUN AWAY.
I'M GOING OUTSIDE ...
TOMEKI, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
+sk
AH, OIRAN.
IT LOOKS BAD. WE'RE SHORT ON MAIDS.
CAN'T LET HER FACE GET BRUISED.
BUT TOMORROW'S THE OIRAN'S DOCHU PROCESSION.
I'LL BEAT YOU TO A PULP!

I HATE WHORES.
WHY DID YOU RUN?
THESE WHORES ARE THE ONES WHO PUT FOOD IN YOUR BELLY.
WE DON'T NEED A REBELLIOUS LITTLE BRAT LIKE YOU.
CUSTOMERS WILL HATE GIRLS LIKE YOU.
BUT YOU'VE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.
YOU CAN MUCK THE DRAINS OR CLEAN THE TOILETS TO EARN YOUR KEEP.

THAT'S ALL YOU'RE SUITABLE FOR.
YOU'LL NEVER BE A COURTESAN.
YOU'RE JUST A SAD LITTLE COUNTRY TURNIP.
NO POINT IN FIGHTING YOUR FATE.

YOU, AN OIRAN? ABSURD.
WHAT'S ABSURD ?!
YOU'RE NOT THAT SPECIAL, SHOHI!
STOP MAKING FUN OF ME!

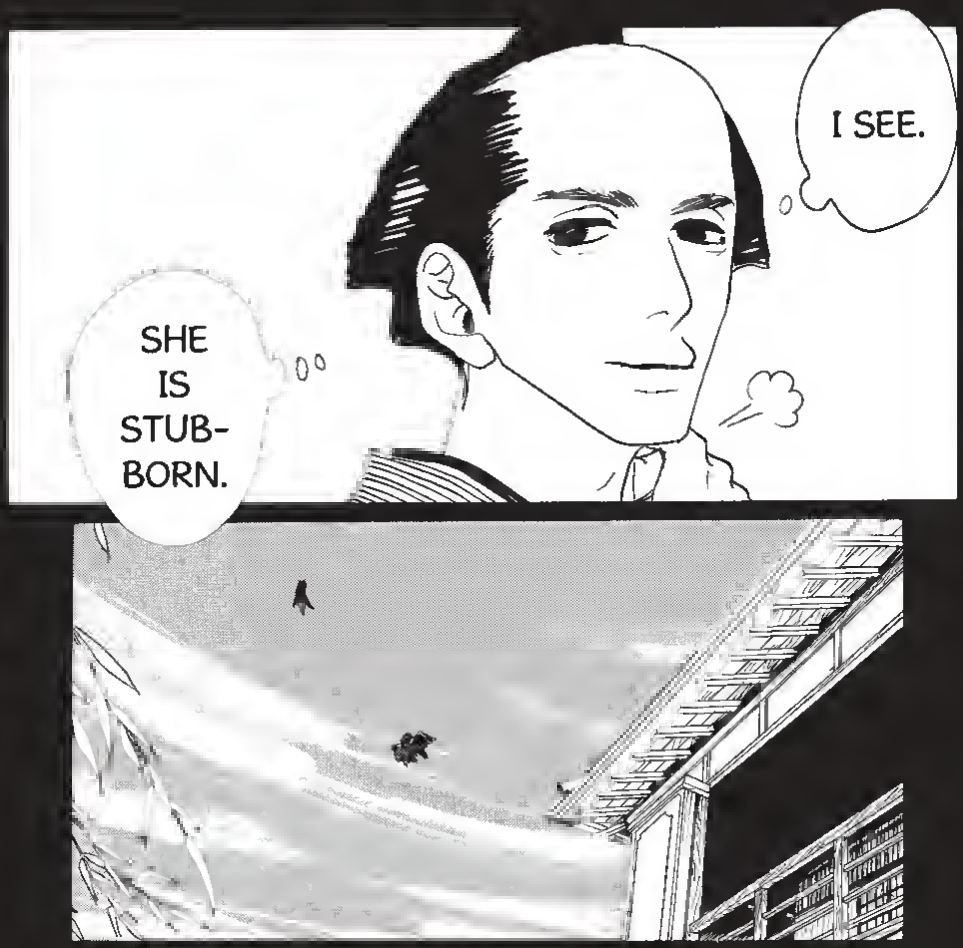
I'LL BE AN APPRENTICE, THEN A SHINZO, THEN A COURTESAN!
Heh
AND I'LL BE AN OIRAN!
...
?
...
COURTESANS...
CAN MAKE GUESTS SAY WHATEVER WE WANT THEM TO.


IT'S CALLED THE ART OF MANIPULATION.

BEAUTIFUL, STRONG-WILLED, QUICK-WITTED AND GOOD IN BED. SHE WAS ALWAYS RANKED IN THE TOP THREE.
SHOHI OF TAMAGIKU.

HM...? SHE'S MISSING A MAID.
粧ひ
粧ひ
粧ひ
粧ひ
粧ひ
Shohi

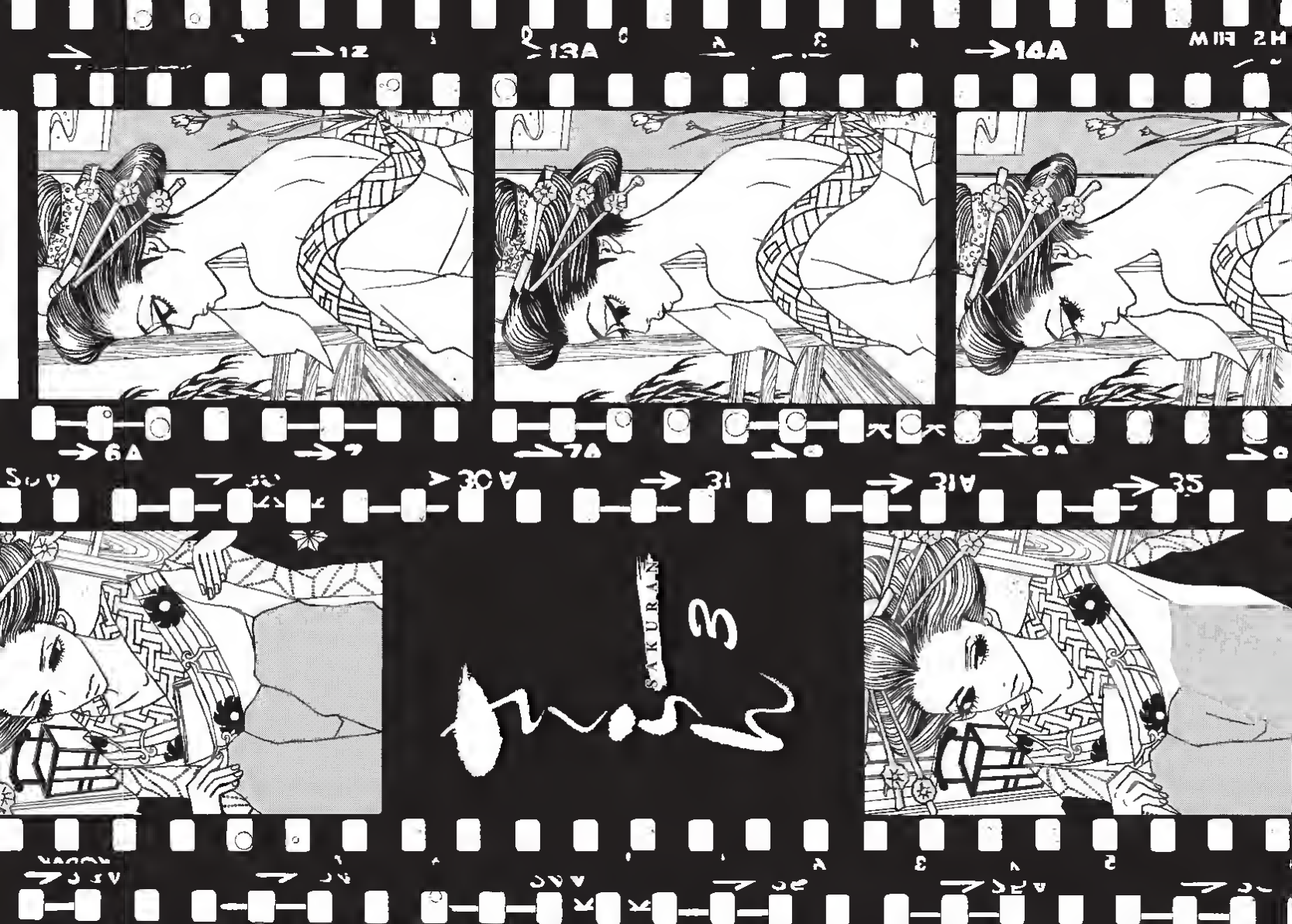
しこ
RUB
しこ
RUB
SHE'S SUCH A BITCH.
NEED HELP?
... SEIJI.
NO!!
GO AWAY!



I'LL BECOME A SCARY OIRAN MYSELF.

IF I STAY HERE, SOMEDAY

CHAPTER 2 END


SAKURAN

TOMEKI! TOMEKI!
UGH. YOU'RE SUCH A LAZY BUM.
10 a.m. The day begins late in Yoshiwara.
PRETENDING TO SLEEP? YOU'VE GOTTEN COMPLACENT.
ZZZ
ZZZ
WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
DOING WHAT OIRAN DOES.

I DON'T NEED YOU TO CLEAN THE CUSHIONS.
THAT GUEST IS STAYING.
YOU MEAN THAT DIMWITTED SAMURAI?
THE GUEST FROM LAST NIGHT...?
OIRAN KEPT HIM WAITING ALL NIGHT.
THE MORNING CROWS ARE CALLING, YET HE'S STILL HERE.

You can spot one easily, even unarmed.
They wear outdated blue-lined kimono.
A hillbilly samurai in Edo to attend the shogun.
Blue-lining?
He should just come for the day shift. He's stretching.
Figures a blue-lining is totally unrefined.
Where's Oiran?
She refuses to get out of bed.
Go check on her.
Achoo.

AH...
...
AH!
たたた
THUP
THUP
ぱしん
SLIDE
...
TOMEKI.
CAN YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT?

I CAN'T EVEN GET TO THE BATHROOM LIKE THIS.
THAT'S A PROBLEM.
SO GO PUT AN END TO IT, QUICKLY.
てけてけ
THUP
THUP
YES'M!
UH...
HOW NOW, LITTLE MAID.
COME HERE.
LOOK... I'VE BROUGHT SWEETS.

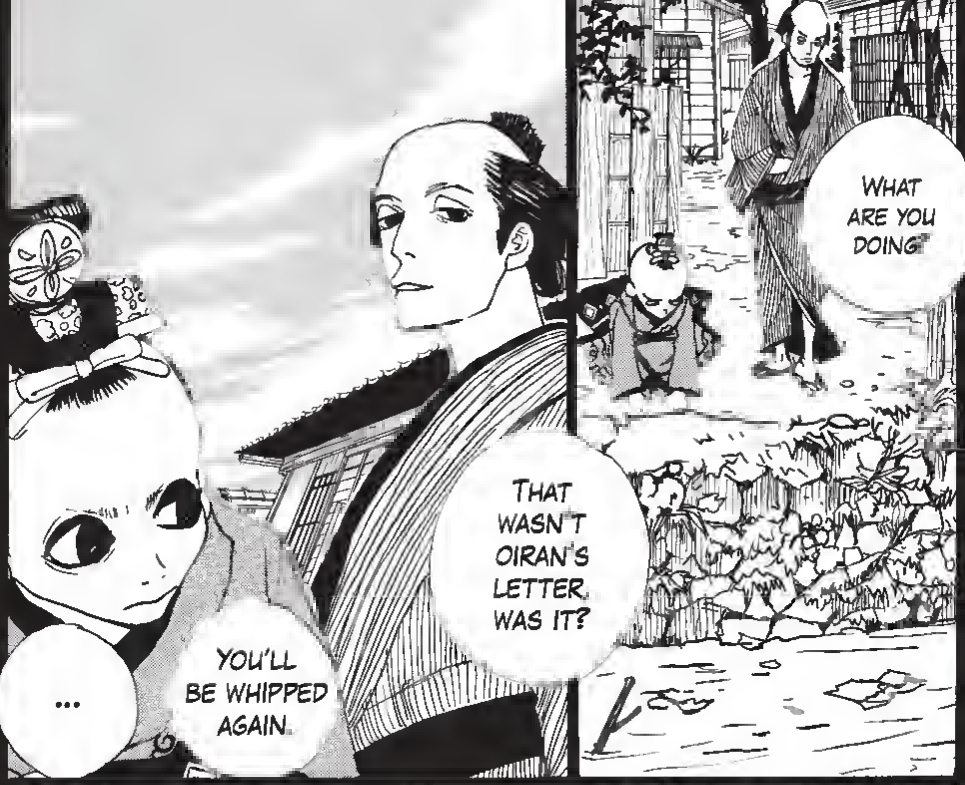
MASTER...
OIRAN ISN'T COMING OUT, SO PLEASE LEAVE.
OH...
WELL, SURE.
GUESS I'LL
のそり...
SLUGGISH
HEAD BACK, THEN.

TELL HER I'LL BE BACK.
YOU'RE SEEING HIM OFF, TOMEKI?
THE OIRAN'S PROXY?
BLUE-LININGS ARE NEVER LUCKY WITH WOMEN.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
OW! STOP IT, BRAT!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU SO ANGRY ABOUT?
TOMEKI.

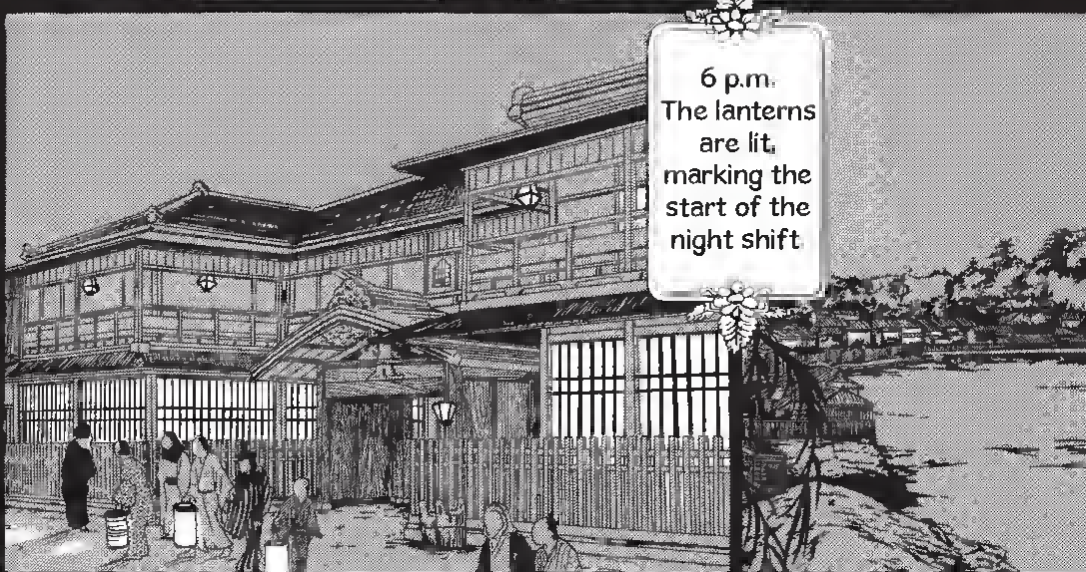
NO THANKS.
I WANTED TO GIVE YOU A REWARD.
HEY, WHERE DID YOU GO? I WAS LOOKING FOR YOU.
2 p.m. The courtesans finish their preparations and begin the day shift.
THE DAY FEE IS CHEAP SO THIS PLACE IS LOUSY WITH SAMURAI.

THAT SAMURAI LAST NIGHT
FELL IN LOVE WITH SHOHI AT THE FIRST MEETING.
AT THE SECOND MEETING HE PRESSURED HER TO MAKE A VOW TO HIM.
HA! HOW ARRO-GANT!
SHE WAS SO REPULSED BY THE IDEA OF BEDDING HIM AT THE THIRD MEETING,
SO SHE CHOSE TO FEIGN SLEEP INSTEAD.
WOW
TOMEKI!
YES!

What are you doing? Come right away when I call.
Deliver this letter to the master of Konoya.


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THAT WASN'T OIRAN'S LETTER, WAS IT?
YOU'LL BE WHIPPED AGAIN.
...

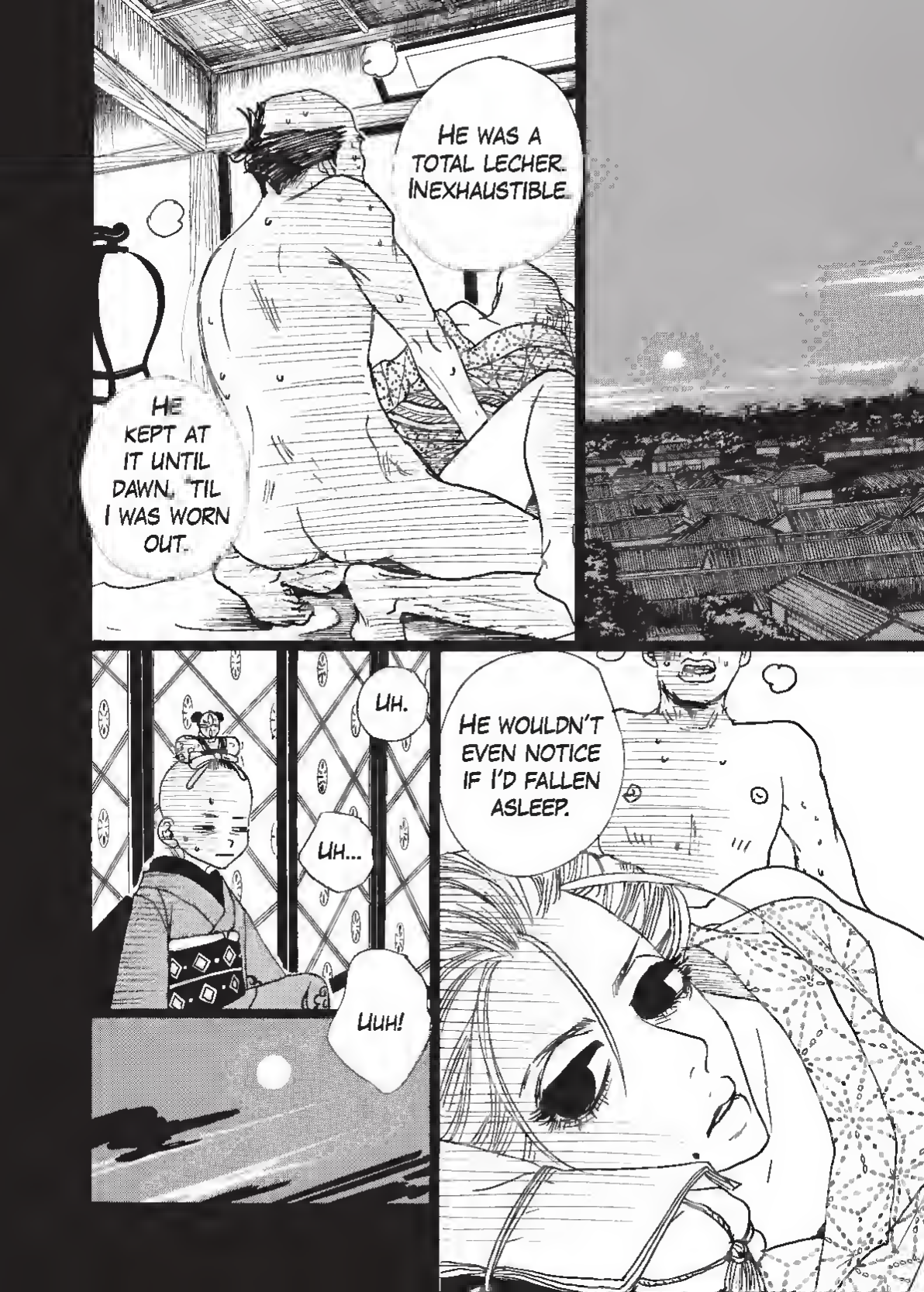
OH, USED TO IT ALREADY?


6 p.m. The lanterns are lit, marking the start of the night shift.

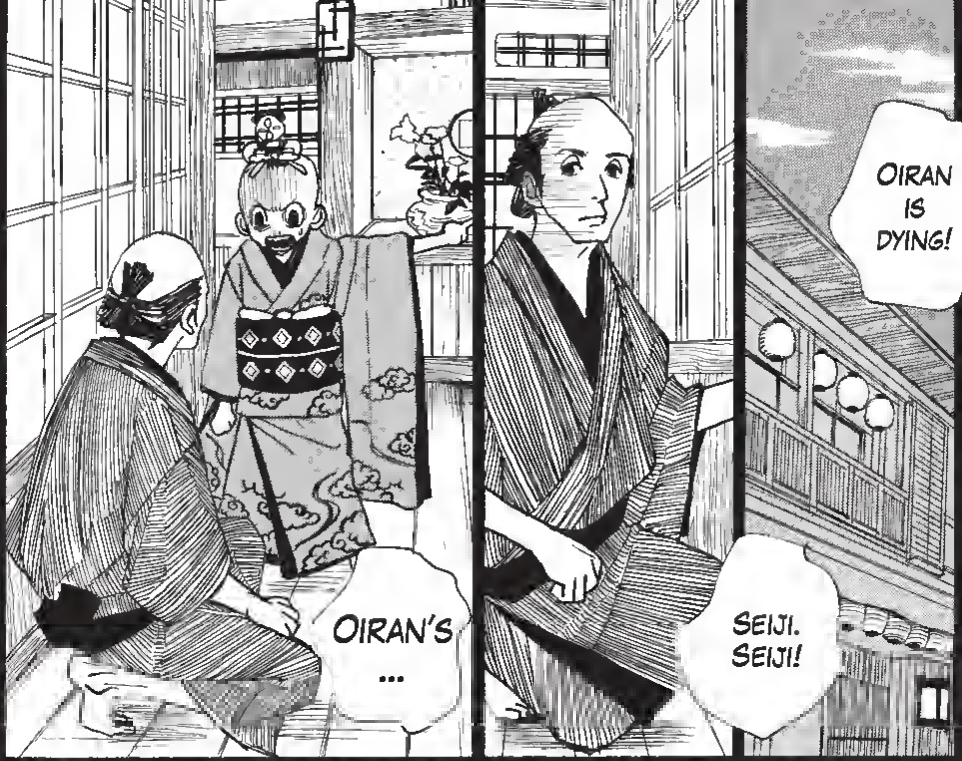
HEY...
THE GUY FROM LAST NIGHT, ACK AGAIN ALREADY.
OIRAN! OIRAN!!
THE "BLUE-LINING" IS HERE AGAIN!

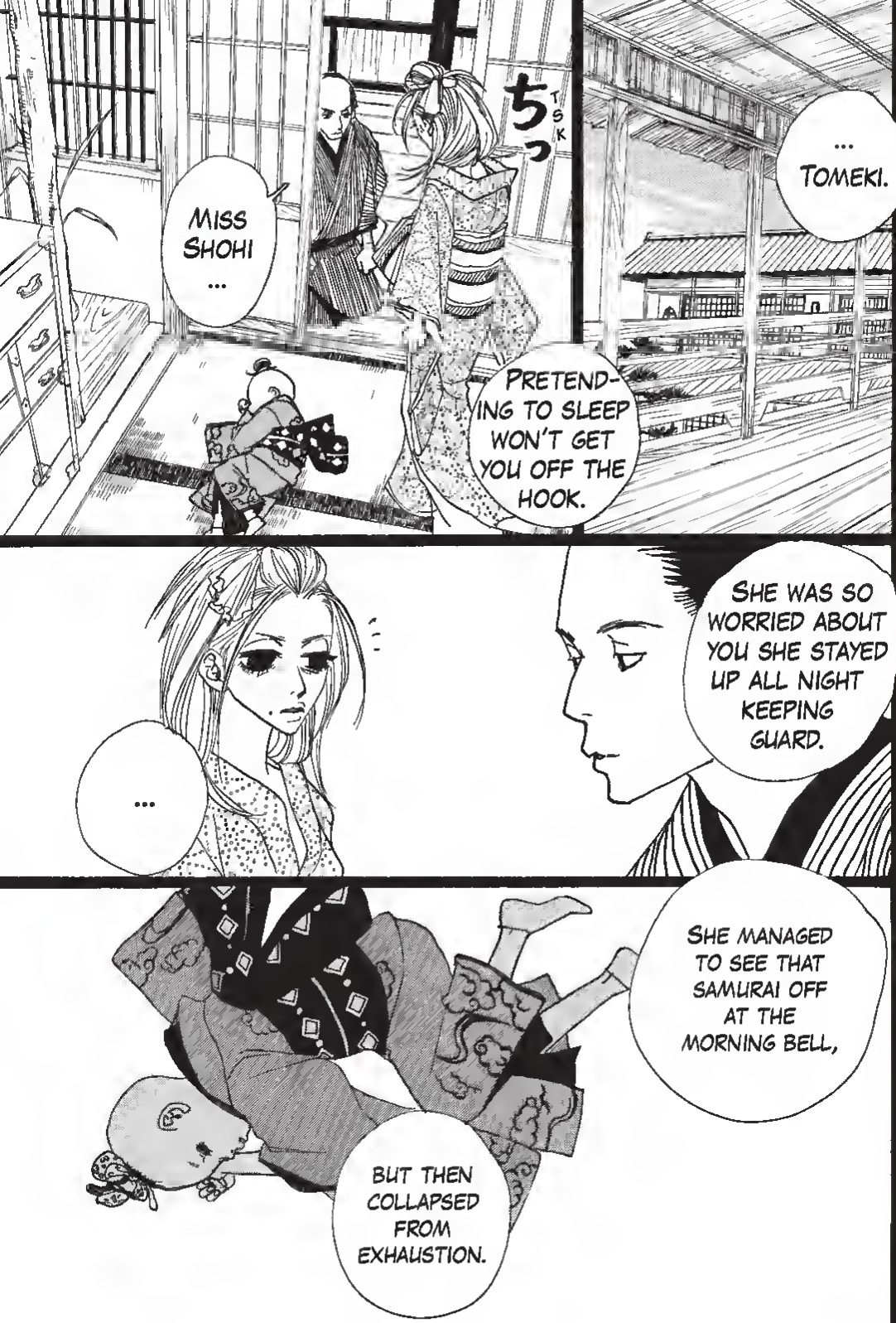
YOU'RE GONNA GET IT.
I WON'T FORGET THAT.
OW!
YOU OK, TOMEKI?
OWIE...
HEH HEH...

AS A RETURN FAVOR FOR THE SWEETS.
I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING BACK THEN.
I JUST WANTED TO GET INVOLVED IN THE "NEGOTIATIONS"


He was a total lecher. Inexhaustible.
He kept at it until dawn, 'til I was worn out.
He wouldn't even notice if I'd fallen asleep.
Uh.
Uh...
Uuh!

PLEASE,
GIVE IT A REST!
NO!
I'M JUST
GET-TING GOING.
2 a.m. The courtesans see their customers off and head to bed at last.
ヒィ〜
AAAH!
しぬぅ〜
I'M DYING!
あわわ…
YIKES


OIRAN'S ...
SEIJI. SEIJI!
OIRAN IS DYING!


MISS SHOHI ...
ちっ TSK
PRETEND-ING TO SLEEP WON'T GET YOU OFF THE HOOK.
... TOMEKI.
...
SHE WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU SHE STAYED UP ALL NIGHT KEEPING GUARD.
SHE MANAGED TO SEE THAT SAMURAI OFF AT THE MORNING BELL,
BUT THEN COLLAPSED FROM EXHAUSTION.

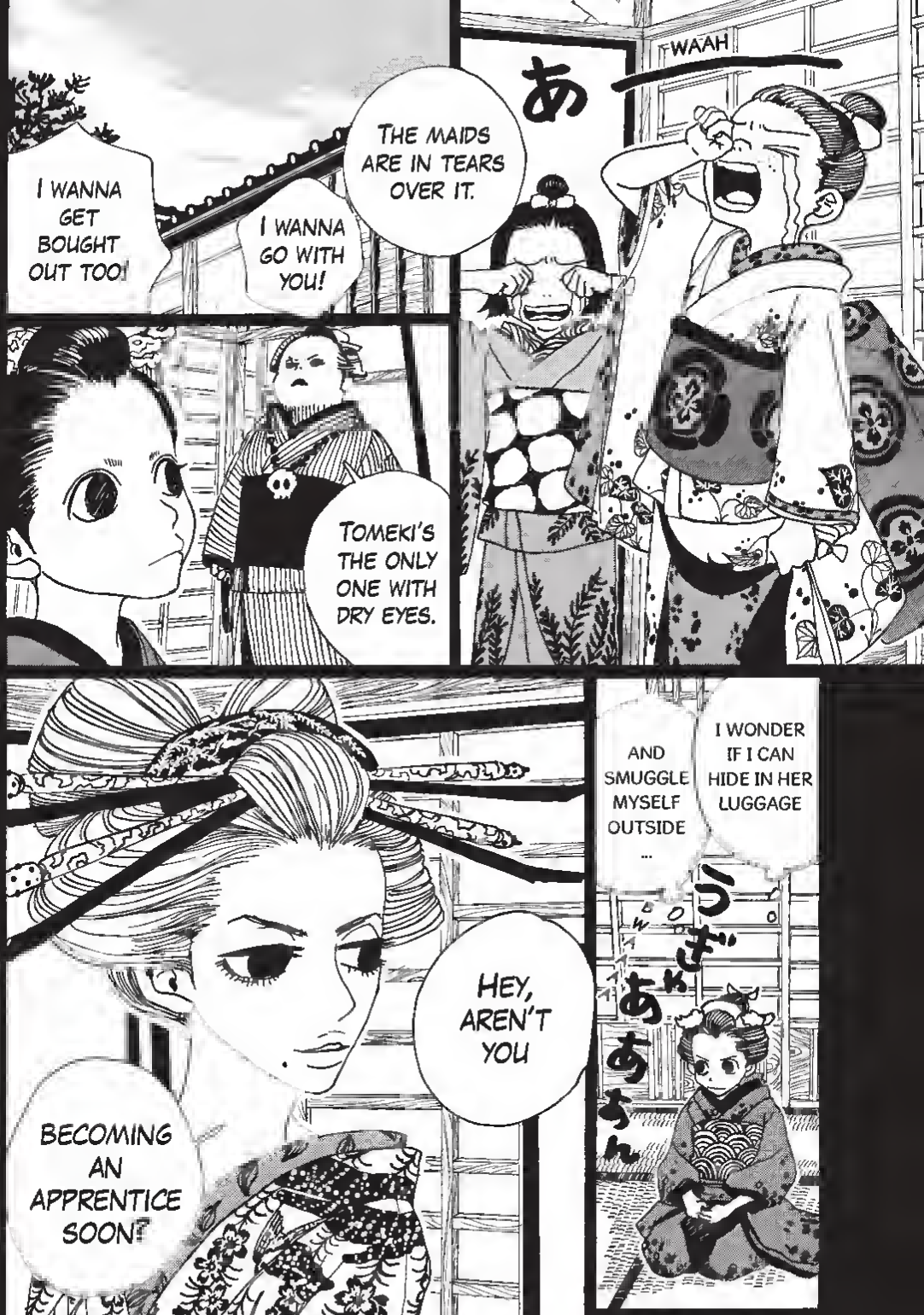
CHAPTER 3 END

I stole a glance of the outside world through the main gate.
OW!
My elder sister grabbed me by the earlobe.
LOOKING WON'T HELP YOU ESCAPE.

4
SAKURAN

WELL, SHE DOESN'T NEED HELP GETTING OUT.
MARRYING A RICH MAN!
The young master of a lumber wholesaler bought Shohi's freedom.
They were to be formally wed that spring.

SHE'S SO LUCKY.
HER FIRST PATRON WAS A DOCTOR.
THE NEXT WAS AN ABBOT PRETENDING TO BE A DOCTOR.
A SUCCESSION OF RICH MEN.
FINALLY SHE'S BOUGHT BY A WEALTHY YOUNG MERCHANT.
YOU GIRLS MUST WANT TO BE LIKE THAT.
OH, REALLY?
RAISED IN A BROTHEL, TRAINED AS A MAID, FORCED TO RUN THE HOUSE...
I WOULDN'T DO IT EVEN IF THEY ASKED ME.
INDEED.
IT'S A HUGE BURDEN TO CARRY.


I WANNA GET BOUGHT OUT TOO!
I WANNA GO WITH YOU!
THE MAIDS ARE IN TEARS OVER IT.
あ
WAAH
TOMEKI'S THE ONLY ONE WITH DRY EYES.
HEY, AREN'T YOU
BECOMING AN APPRENTICE SOON?
AND SMUGGLE MYSELF OUTSIDE ...
I WONDER IF I CAN HIDE IN HER LUGGAGE
うぶあちん

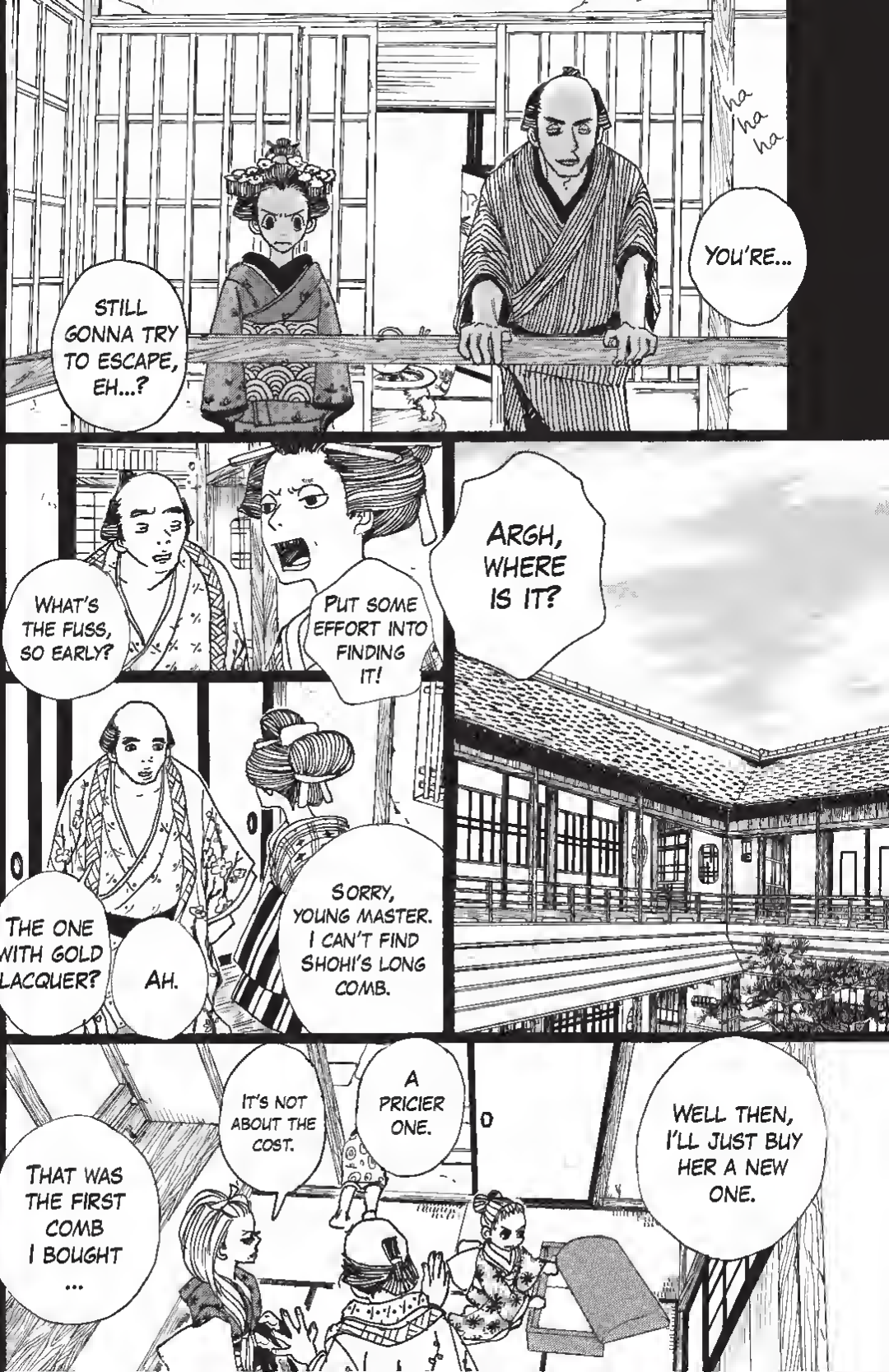
YOU SHOULD START CLIMBING THAT LADDER.
AFTER APPRENTICE-SHIP YOU'RE BOUND TO BE A COUR-TESAN.
APPREN-TICES GET TO WEAR PRETTY KIMONO,
LEARN THE HARP, SHAMISEN, CALLIGRAPHY AND HAIKU.
THEY'RE TREATED BETTER THAN US.
THE MOON HAS A CORONA.
RAIN TOMORROW?

HEY, WHERE'S YOUR KIMONO?
... IT WAS GONE WHEN I WOKE UP.
LISTEN UP.
EVERYTHING HERE, FROM THE BRAZIER TO THE FUTONS TO YOUR CLOTHING ALL BELONG TO SHOHL
THE OIRAN DON'T EVER FORGET THAT.
LOSING SOMETHING MAKES YOU NO BETTER THAN A THIEF.
THEN I'LL BUY HER A NEW ONE.

HUH ?!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH ONE KIMONO COSTS?!
I WON'T PUT UP WITH YOUR INSOLENT MOUTH!
WHUNK

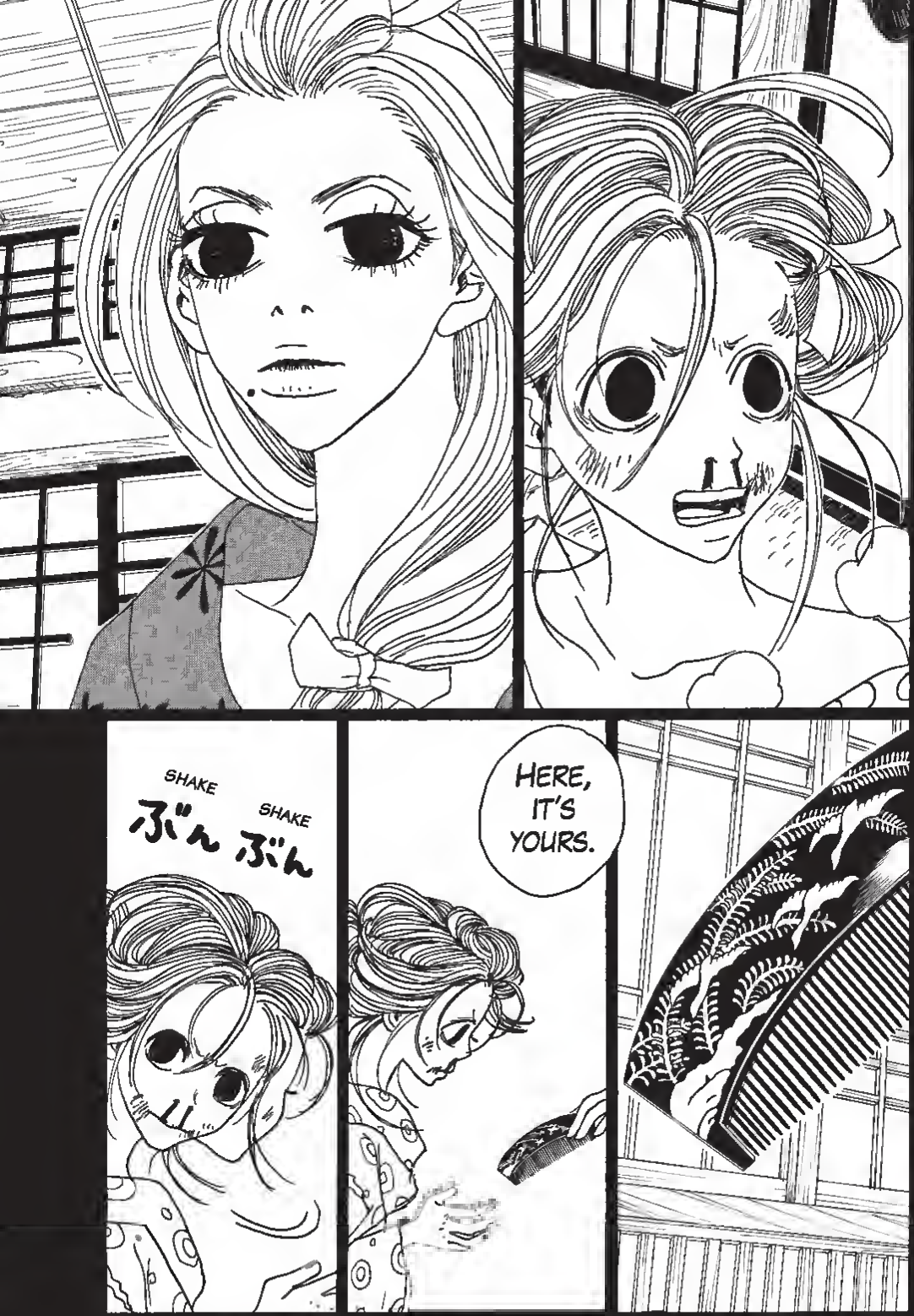
From that day on, Shohi was even colder towards her attendant maids
TOMEKI'S AN UNGRATEFUL LITTLE IMP.
and even the *shinzo*.
ぽつねん…
ALONE
HEY.
DON'T LOOK SO SAD.
I BROUGHT SOME LEFTOVERS. THEY'RE UNEATEN.
I DON'T WANT ANY.
JUST EAT IT.

MUNCH MUNCH
がつがつがつ
YOUR ELDER SISTER GETTING RELEASED?
AREN'T YOU SAD ABOUT
hahaha
Ikore waisa!
YOU'D BE CUTE IF YOU ACTED MORE SWEETLY.
THAT'S WHY YOU GET PICKED ON.
U R P
SHE'S LUCKY TO GET TO GO TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
WHY IS EVERYONE SO SAD THEY'RE CRYING ABOUT THAT?
THE OUTSIDE WORLD...

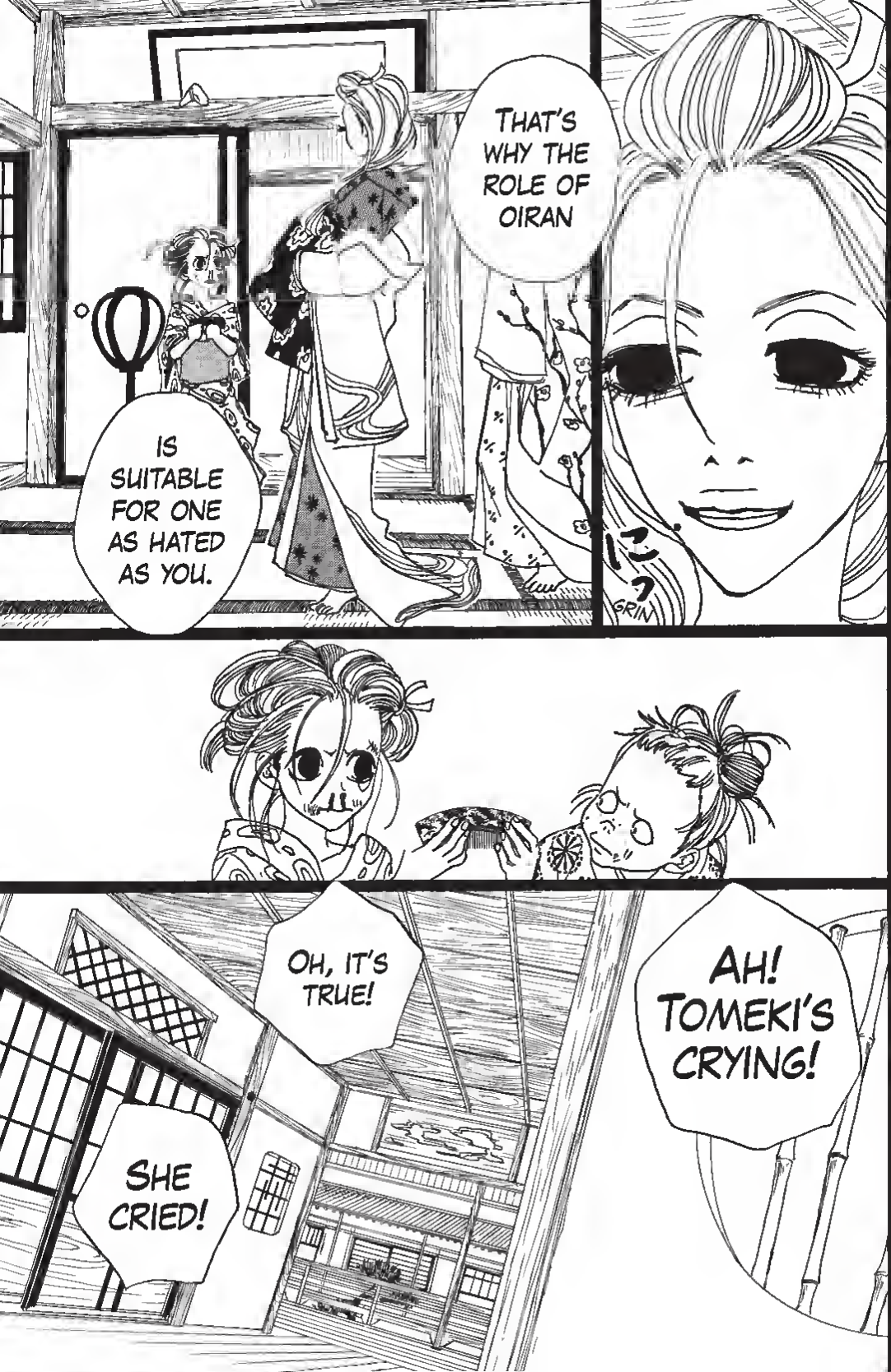

STILL GONNA TRY TO ESCAPE, EH...?
ha ha ha
YOU'RE...
WHAT'S THE FUSS, SO EARLY?
PUT SOME EFFORT INTO FINDING IT!
ARGH, WHERE IS IT?
THE ONE WITH GOLD LACQUER?
AH.
SORRY, YOUNG MASTER. I CAN'T FIND SHOHI'S LONG COMB.
THAT WAS THE FIRST COMB I BOUGHT ...
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE COST.
A PRICIER ONE.
WELL THEN, I'LL JUST BUY HER A NEW ONE.

AH!
FOUND IT!
TOMEKI
HEH HEH ...
JUST PULLED THAT OUT OF HER SLEEVE!
I SAW IT.
TOMEKI'S A THIEF.
SHE'S SUCH A VULGAR BRAT.
SHE WAS GONNA PAWN IT FOR A KIMONO.
NO, SHE'S JUST DUMB.
SHE STOLE IT YET PRETENDED TO FIND IT.

うぎゃー
AAAARGH!
I was so angered by their piling on that my mind went blank. I flew into a rage,
kicking and punching the other maids.
With one yank from the oiran I regained my senses
がっ
GRAB

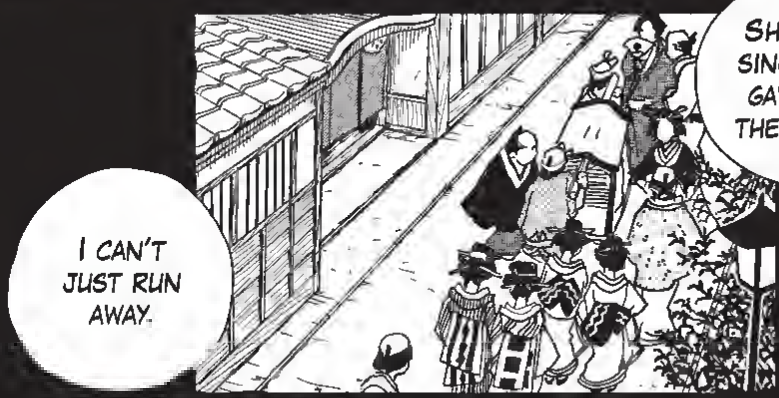

SHAKE
ぶん
SHAKE
ぶん
HERE, IT'S YOURS.

SHE SCRATCHED ME. LOOK, I'M BLEEDING!
SHE BIT ME! IT HURTS!
OW, OWIE!
YOU CURSED BRAT.
YES, TOMEKI.
SHE'S OFFERING. YOU SHOULD TAKE IT.
THIS IS HOW IT IS.
THOSE WHO HAVE THE MOST ARE HATED THE MOST.

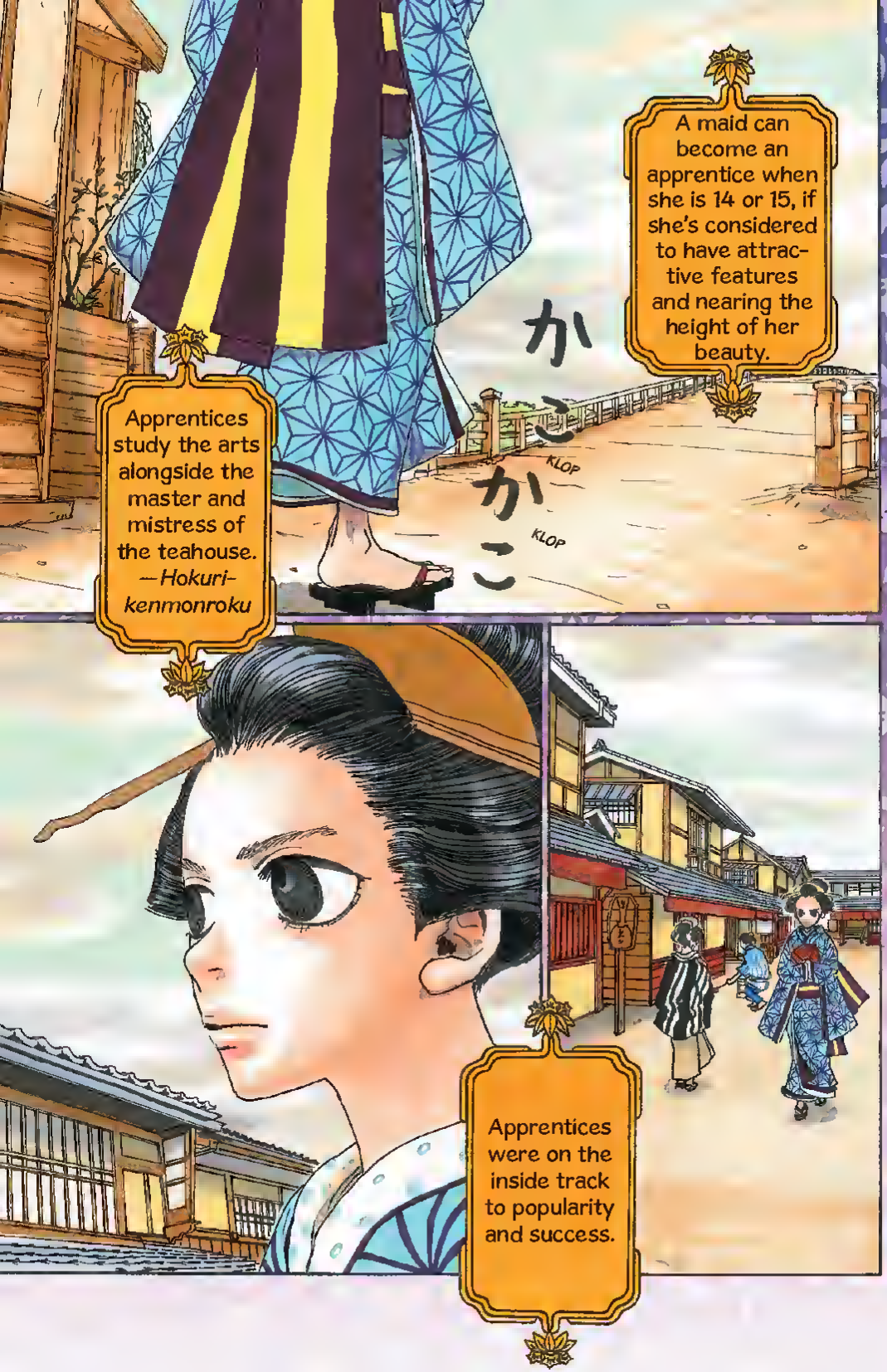

THAT'S WHY THE ROLE OF OIRAN
IS SUITABLE FOR ONE AS HATED AS YOU.
GRIN
AH! TOMEKI'S CRYING!
OH, IT'S TRUE!
SHE CRIED!

EVEN TOMEKI'S TORN UP ABOUT IT.
SHE WAS TRYING SO HARD NOT TO CRY.
POOR THING.
Starting early that day the house gave money and red rice to the geishas and taiko drummers
and a lavish farewell banquet was held for her fellow courtesans.

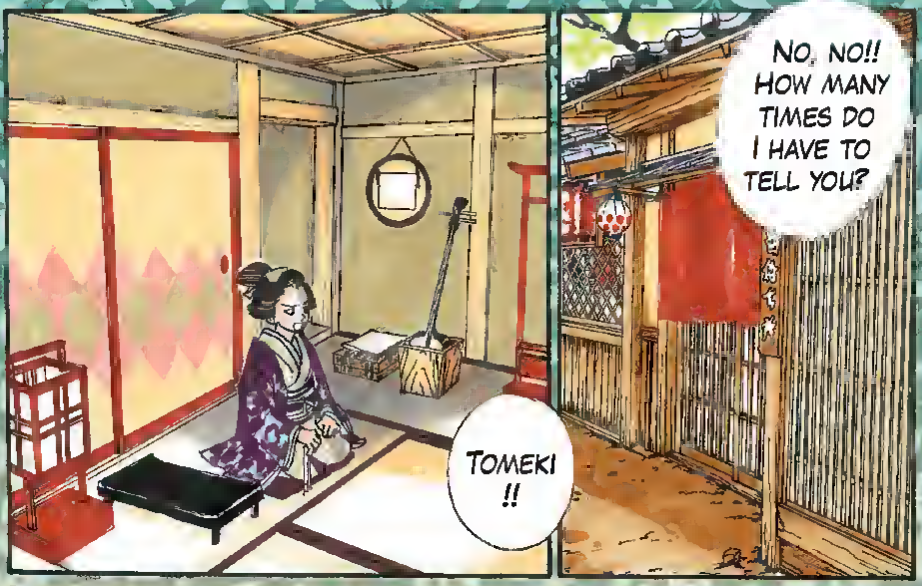
BE WELL.
GOOD BYE, SHOHI.



CHAPTER 4 END


A maid can become an apprentice when she is 14 or 15, if she's considered to have attractive features and nearing the height of her beauty.
か
KLOP
こ
KLOP
Apprentices study the arts alongside the master and mistress of the teahouse.
—Hokuri-kenmonroku
Apprentices were on the inside track to popularity and success.

SAKURAN
5

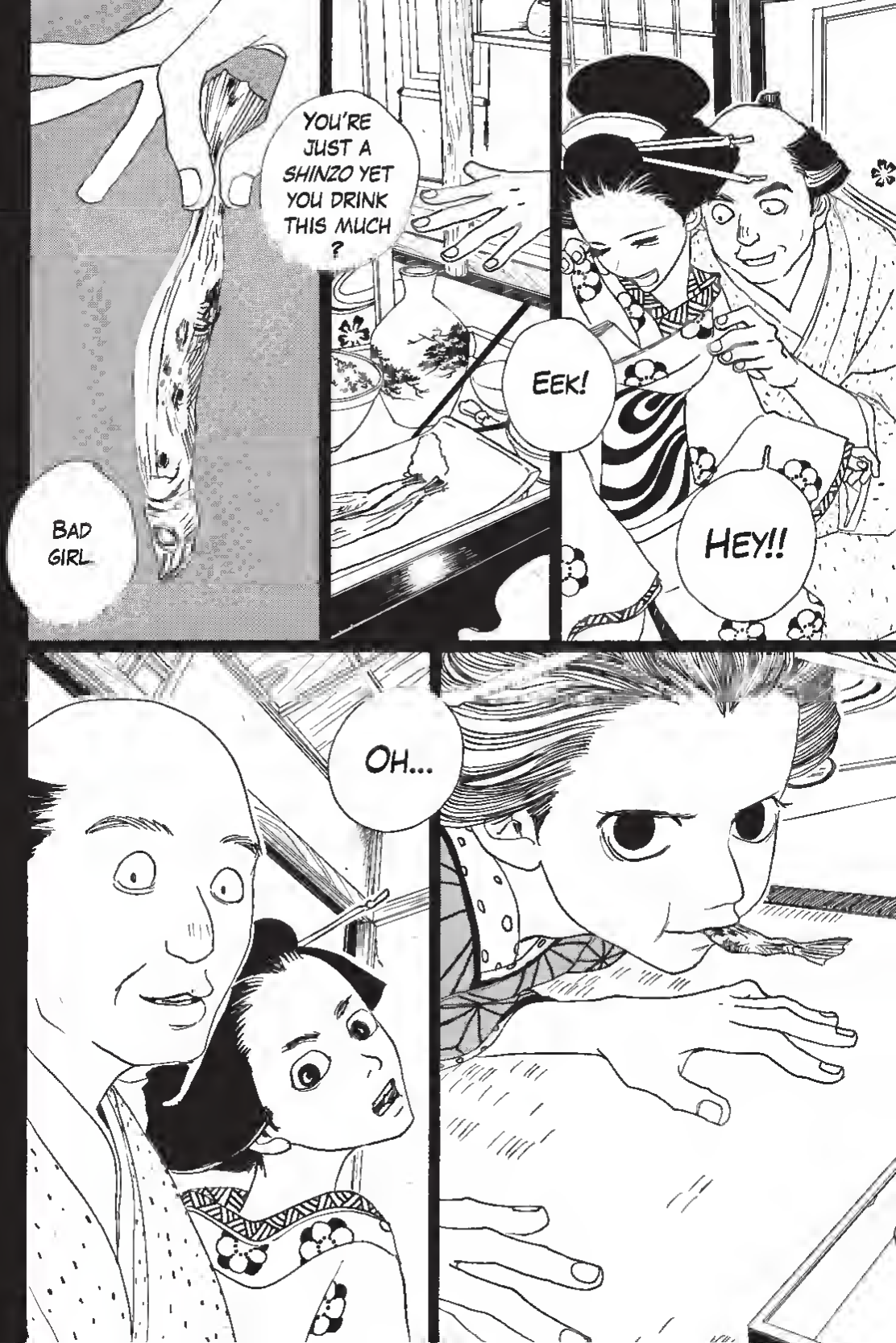

TOMEKI !!
NO, NO!! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?

STOP BOTHERING O-SOME!

にこっ
SMILE
ちら
GLANCE
O-Some was an apprentice with the Matsuba House. She was a year older, at 13.
SHE'S ALREADY GREAT AT HOSPITALITY.
SHE'S GONNA BE MORE POPULAR THAN SEGAWA.

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?
WHEN THE PAGE CAME FROM THE REHEARSAL HALL I THOUGHT I WOULD DIE FROM SHAME.
YOU'RE WRONG IF YOU THINK YOU CAN GET BY ON LOOKS.
YOU'VE GOT NO SOCIAL GRACES.
WHO SAID YOU COULD EAT?!

AND CLEAN UP IN THE BATH-ROOM.
YOU EXCUSE YOURSELF
WHAT IF HE DOES?
AND YOU CAN'T LET HIM FINISH INSIDE.
HEE HEE!
OH, HOW HATEFUL.
I'M SICK OF LOOKING AT YOUR FACE.
IS THE OIRAN STILL NOT HERE?


BAD GIRL
YOU'RE JUST A SHINZO YET YOU DRINK THIS MUCH ?
EEK!
HEY!!
OH...

NOW, NOW.
WHY YOU LITTLE CAT BURGLAR!
UH, SHE'S AN APPRENTICE.
HEY, C'MERE.
JUST PRETENDING I OWN THE PLACE.
I'M NOT GONNA TAKE ANYTHING FROM HER.
SHE CAN'T WORK FOR YOU.
C'MERE 'N SHOW ME.
SEE IF THEY'RE FINE.
I'LL INSPECT YOUR GOODS.

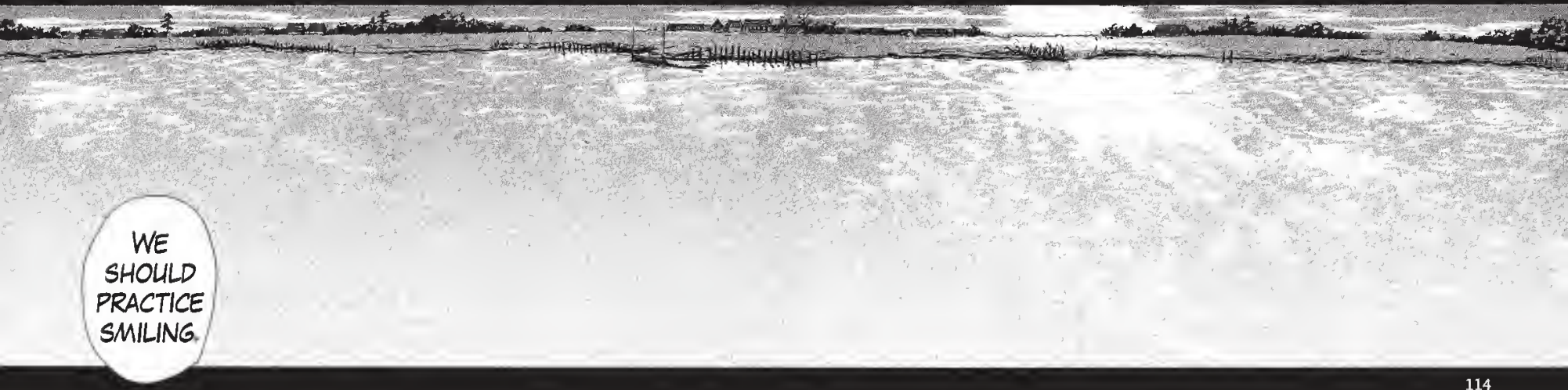
BAM
HEY! WAIT!!
NO!!
GRAB THAT WENCH!
THUD
どた
どた
THUD

DON'T RUN.
JUST... SMILE.
どす
THUD
どす
THUD
AH... VERY SORRY.
DON'T YOU TEACH THEM ANY MANNERS?
SHE EMBARRASSED ME.
SHE'S NOT DEBUTED AS A SHINZO YET.
SHE'S STILL JUST A MAID.

ぽた：
DRIP
It's the day shift, but there are other guests here.
You don't want rumors spreading that you chased a maid and made her cry.
Hmm... Well... I don't want to kick up a fuss.
Thank you very much.
Shh.
Ugh, what an ass, acting like some hot-shot merchant.
No wonder oiran always keeps him waiting.
...? Tomeki?
Er, I mean, O-rin.

WELL, THAT MEANS YOU CAN START WORKING,
RIGHT, O-RIN?
SO YOU NEED TO COME UP WITH A BETTER ESCAPE PLAN.
YOU HADN'T GOTTEN IT YET?
O-RIN!!

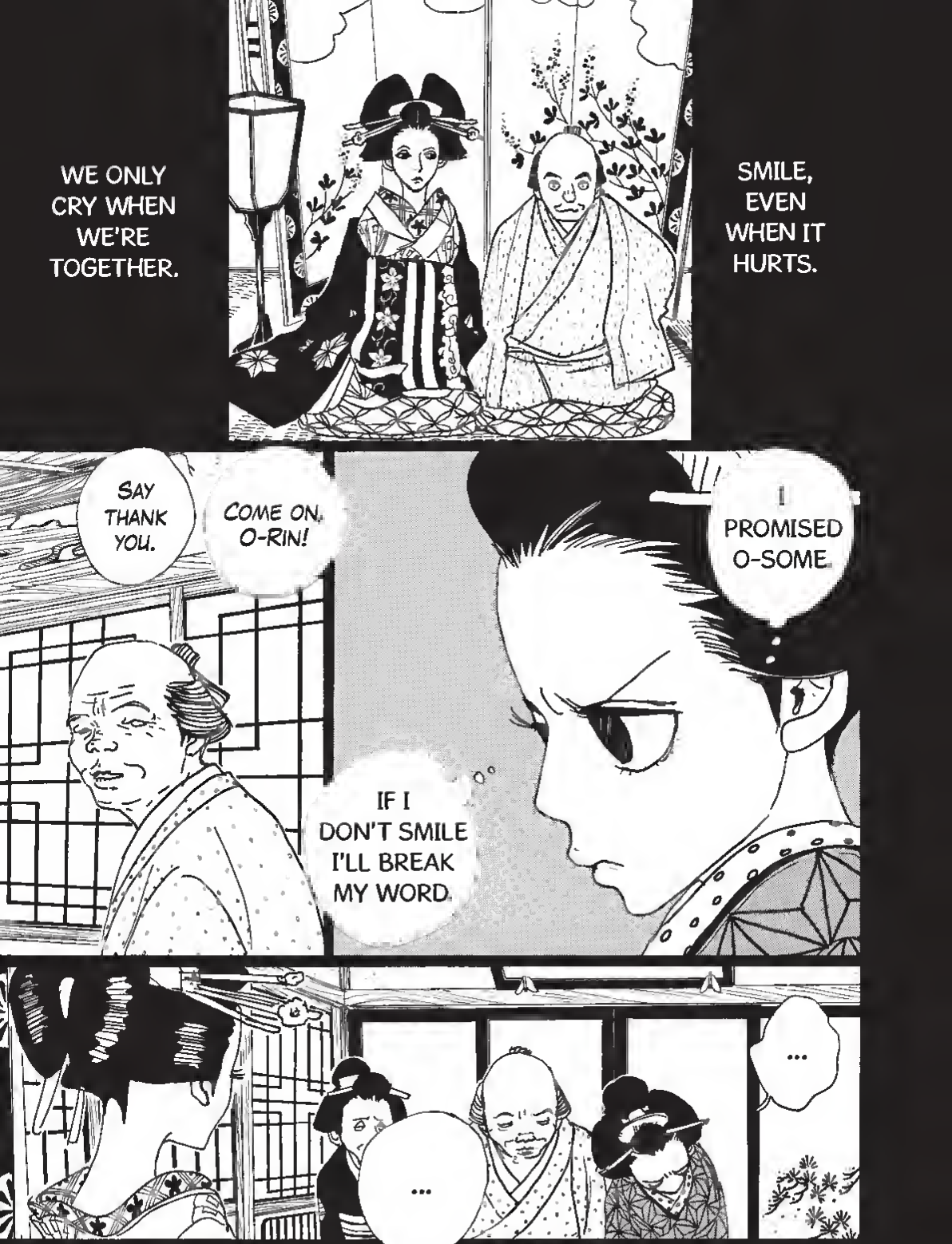
AND WALKED BACK AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.
AND AFTER WE'D CRIED FOR A WHILE WE FELT DDDLY REFRESHED,
AND WEPT,
WE STDDD AND RAISED OUR VOICES IN WAILS,
WHETHER WE WERE HURT, OR SAD, DR ASHAMED,
DUR CIRCUMSTANCES WERE SIMILAR, SD WE CDULD PRETTY MUCH GUESS.
WE NEVER SPOKE OF OR ASKED ABDUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED.


WE SHOULD PRACTICE SMILING.

PINKY SWEAR!
Grin
HEH.
SMILE !!
WE HAD NO PLACE OF OUR OWN. WE'D BECOME *SHINZO*, FORCED TO TEND TO MEN.
YOU'RE LATE! WHERE'VE YOU BEEN, LAZY BRAT?
(にっこ)
GRIN
WE PROMISED TO CRY ONLY DURING THOSE TIMES WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER.

O-RIN! IS IT TRUE THAT YOU TACKLED MASTER WAKASAYA AND RAN AWAY?
PROBABLY ATE SOMETHING FUNNY.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER?
にっこり
SNEER
YUP.
HEY, DID YOU HEAR?
CON-CEITED TWERP!

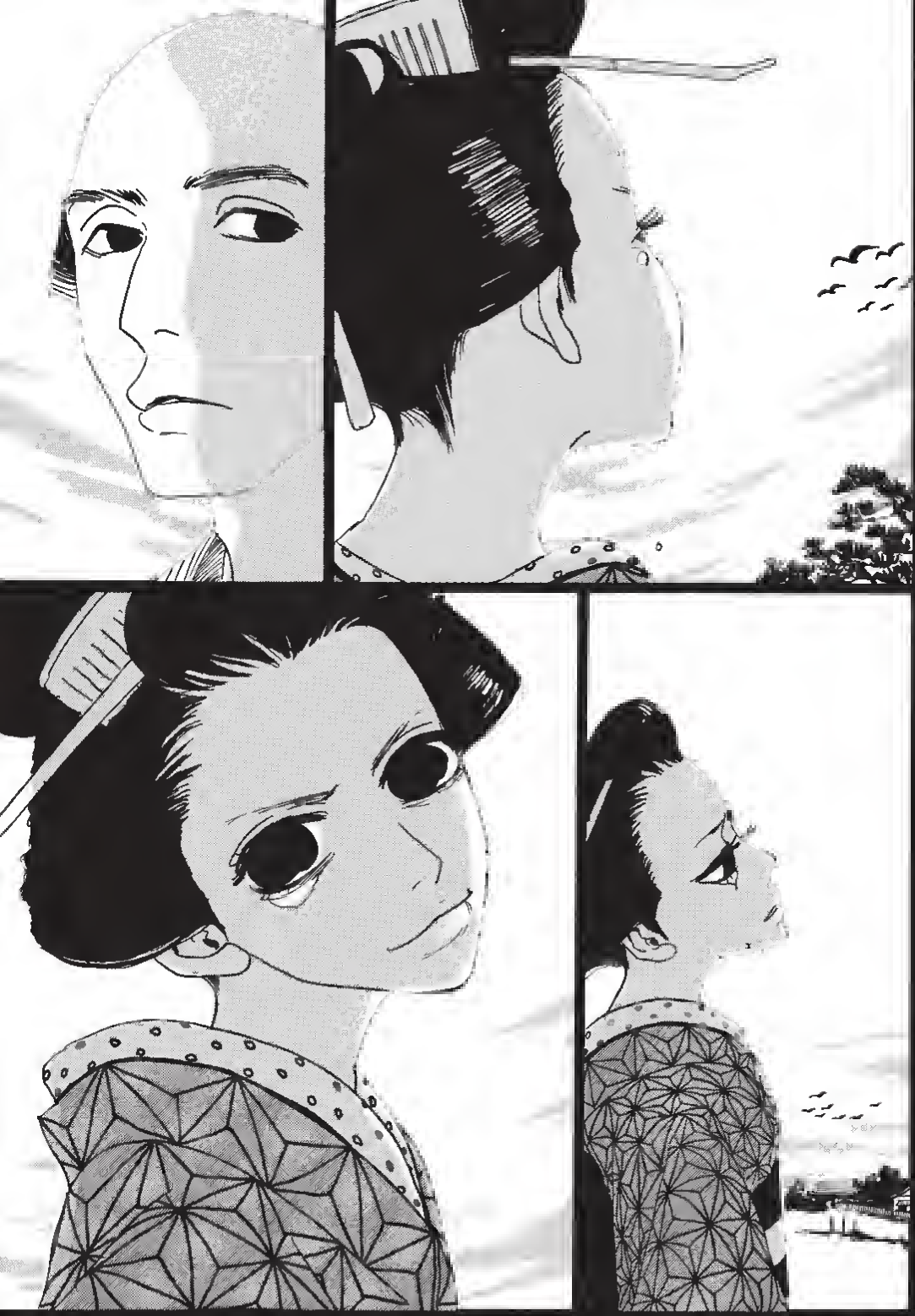
伸之町
御神燈
O-Some of Matsuba was debuted for a whopping 500 ryo.
We gotta beat that.
...
But I wonder who'll take O-Rin.
Master Wakasaya, of course.
MASTER WAKASAYA
He's been infatuated with her ever since that incident.
Lucky you, O-Rin!
He's with Mikumo oiran right now.
Go say hello.


WE ONLY CRY WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER.
SMILE, EVEN WHEN IT HURTS.
SAY THANK YOU.
COME ON, O-RIN!
I PROMISED O-SOME.
IF I DON'T SMILE I'LL BREAK MY WORD.
...
...

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
SHEESH. I WONDER HOW IT'LL ALL WORK OUT.

SPEAKING OF GIRLS MAKING DEBUTS, MATSUBA'S O-SOME
BUT THAT MEANS YOU'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE A GRAND DEBUT AS A SHINZO.
YOUR CREEPY SMILE.
HE'S A REAL WEIRDO IF HE LIKES
PINKY SWEAR
SHE HUNG HERSELF, OR WAS PUNISHED TOO SEVERELY.
かこ
KLOP
KLOP
SHE "CAUGHT THE PLAGUE," AS IT WERE.
DIED LAST NIGHT.
仲之町

SOB
O-SOME !!
SOB
STOP WASTING YOUR TEARS HERE.
HIC
...
CRY IN FRONT OF YOUR CLIENTS, IF YOU HAVE TO.



WHO'S CRYING?
They say O-Rin's world-weary smile
enticed a succes-sion of rich men to line up just 3 months after her debut.
AND HER SMILE COULD
MAKE YOU SHIVER.

CHAPTER 5 END

MIKUMO IS SO GENEROUS
TO PAY FOR A LAVISH DEBUT.
NOW YOU'RE A SHINZO.
GO RAKE IN THE CASH.
Shinzo courtesans are so named as they are likened to newly-launched ships.
—Yoshiwara Taizen

SAKURAÑ
6

WELL, WELL.
LOOKS LIKE THAT BASTARD WAKASAYA
MADE THE FIRST MOVE.

There's bolts of fine silk crepe piled up from the front lattice to the road,
and tobacco pouches and fans inscribed with "Kiyoha" ♡
Ah! Bastard! Where'd you swipe that from?
It must've cost 200 ryo, all told.
Quite a sum.
Mikumo must be totally charmed by that Shinzo.

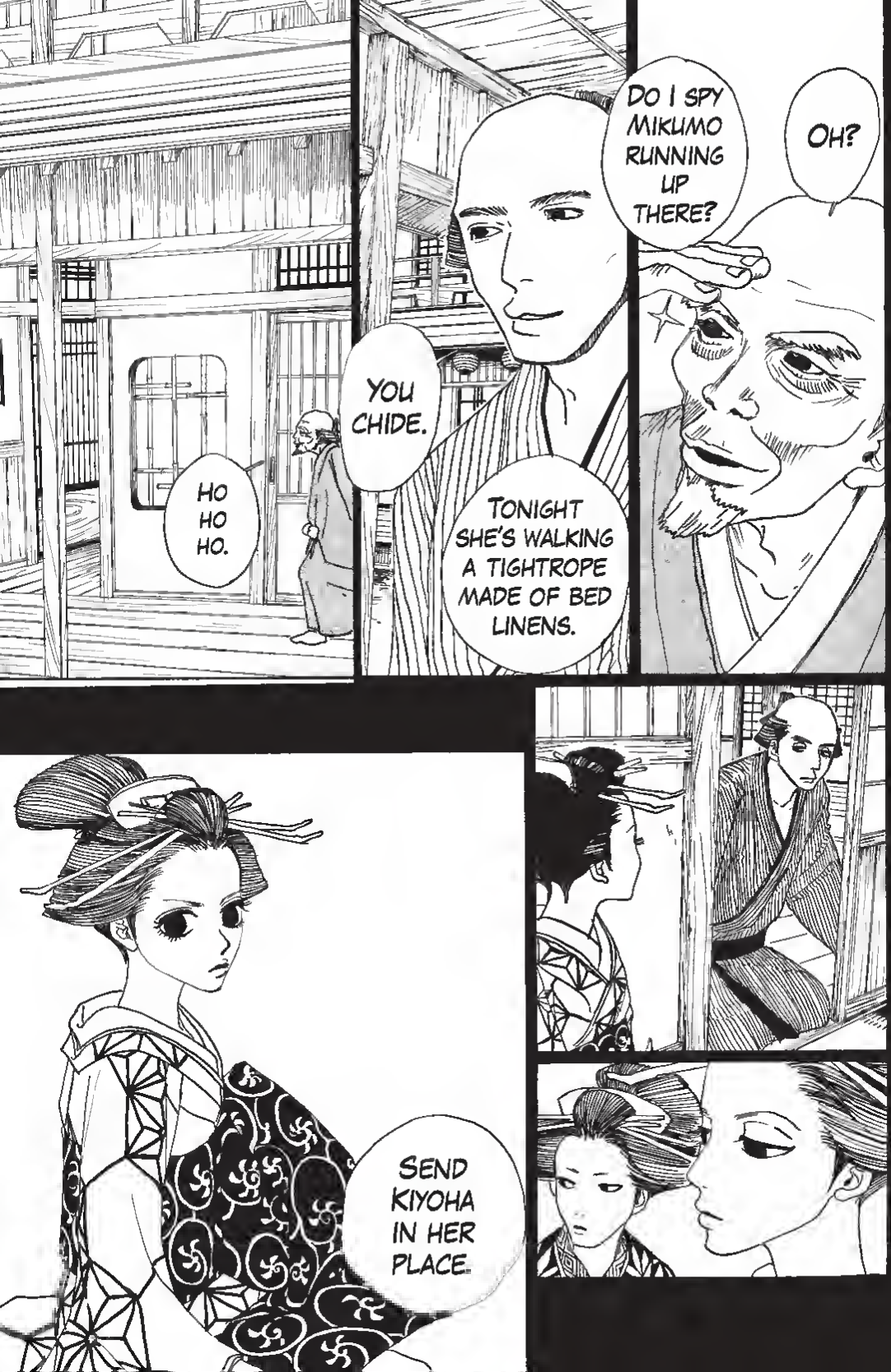
SHE'S ALREADY SHOWING SOME SIGNS OF SENSUALITY.
SHE'S CHANGED FROM WHEN SHE WAS THE MAID TOMEKI.
MY GRATI-TUDE.
MY SISTER MIKUMO, I WISH TO EXPRESS
AND MIKUMO'S LOOKING AFTER ME NOW, WHICH I'M GRATEFUL FOR.
WELL, THAT WAS DEBATABLE.
SHOHI WAS BAD-NATURED.
"MY SISTER MIKUMO," EH?
SHOHI WAS LIKE SHAD WRAPPED IN KOMBU. PRETTY ON THE OUTSIDE, YET DISGUSTING.

UHM...
OH, A MOSQUITO ...
とん SNAP
BUT... I STILL CAN'T EVER LET MY GUARD DOWN.
WHAT IS IT, KIYOHA?
UH.

MUNCH
JUST BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T YELL DOESN'T MEAN SHE'S NICE.
MIKUMO IS VERY NICE.
KONO-HA! KONOHA !!
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...
MY BIG SISTER IS ALWAYS PISSY.
IF IT WASN'T FOR MIKUMO
KEEP TALKING THAT WAY AND YOU'LL BE WHIPPED.
YOU'D BE INDEBTED TO SOME TEAHOUSE, FORCED TO WORK FOR THEM FOR YEARS.
MUNCH
SHE'S HELPING YOU OUT, A TOTAL STRANGER.
MUNCH

かかっつ
SKRAPE
SKRAPE
DON'T EVER FORGET THAT MIKUMO'S THE ONE WHO'S SHOULDERED THE DEBT
OF THE COST OF YOUR DEBUT.
ANOTHER GUEST FOR MIKUMO.
THE ONLY REASON TO BECOME A FULL-FLEDGED *SHINZO* IS TO BE ABLE TO PLAY FREELY.
SHE'LL BE BUSY RUSHING BETWEEN GUESTS ALL NIGHT.

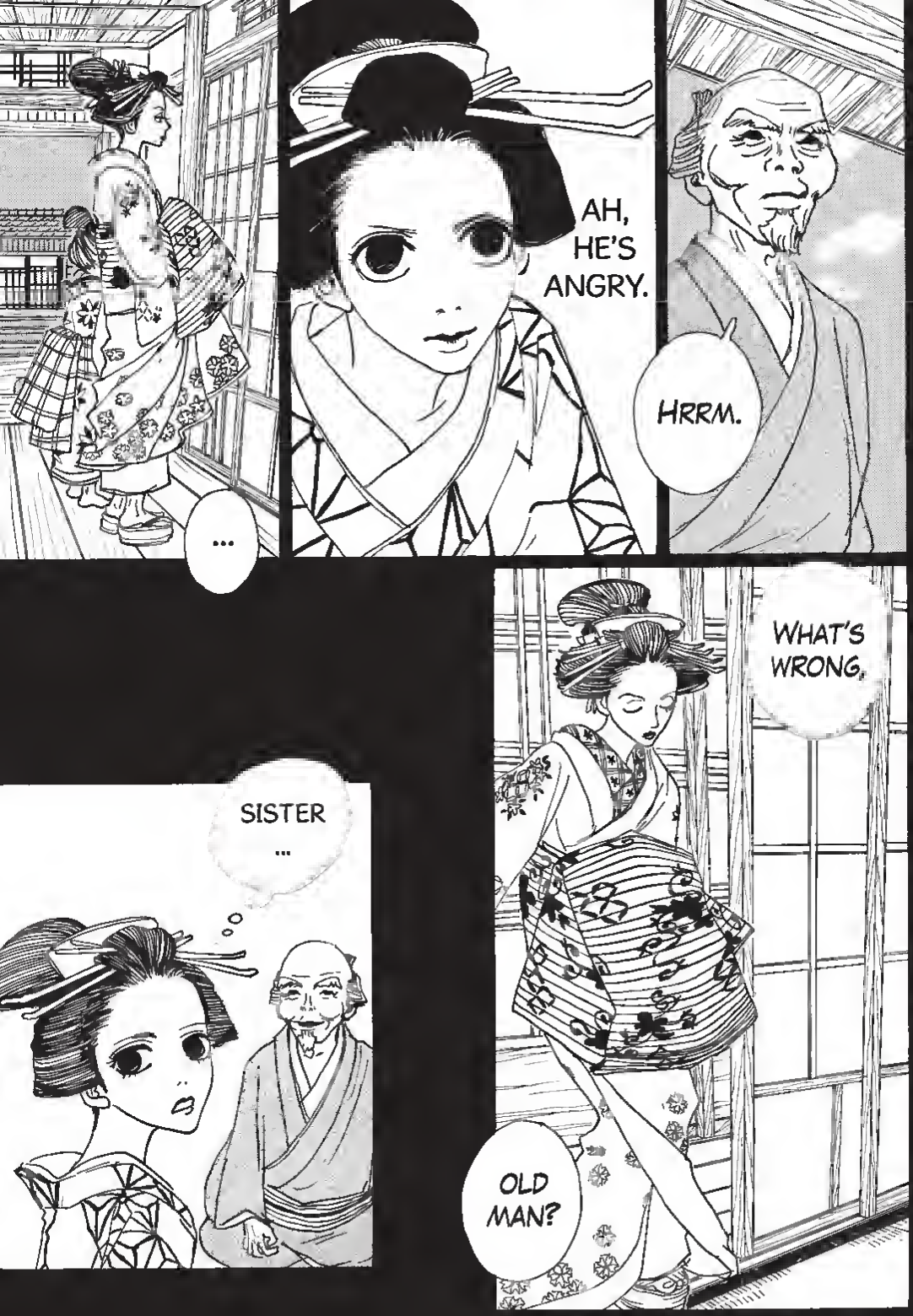
SPEAKING OF, HERE'S ANOTHER.
WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE OLD PENSIONER. LONG TIME NO SEE, SIR.
WHERE'S MIKUMO?
O-OF COURSE ...
SHE'S BEEN PINING FOR YOU.
CRAP. TONIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS.
FIRST, THE FAVORED WAKASAYA,
THEN THE SHOGUN'S VASSAL, SAWADA.
NEITHER WILL PUT UP WITH DELAYS.
WELL, THE MOST IMPATIENT OF THEM ALL IS...
とん TMP
とん TMP


HO HO HO.
YOU CHIDE.
TONIGHT SHE'S WALKING A TIGHTROPE MADE OF BED LINENS.
DO I SPY MIKUMO RUNNING UP THERE?
OH?
SEND KIYOHA IN HER PLACE.

MAKE ME PROUD.
EXCUSE US.
COME IN.

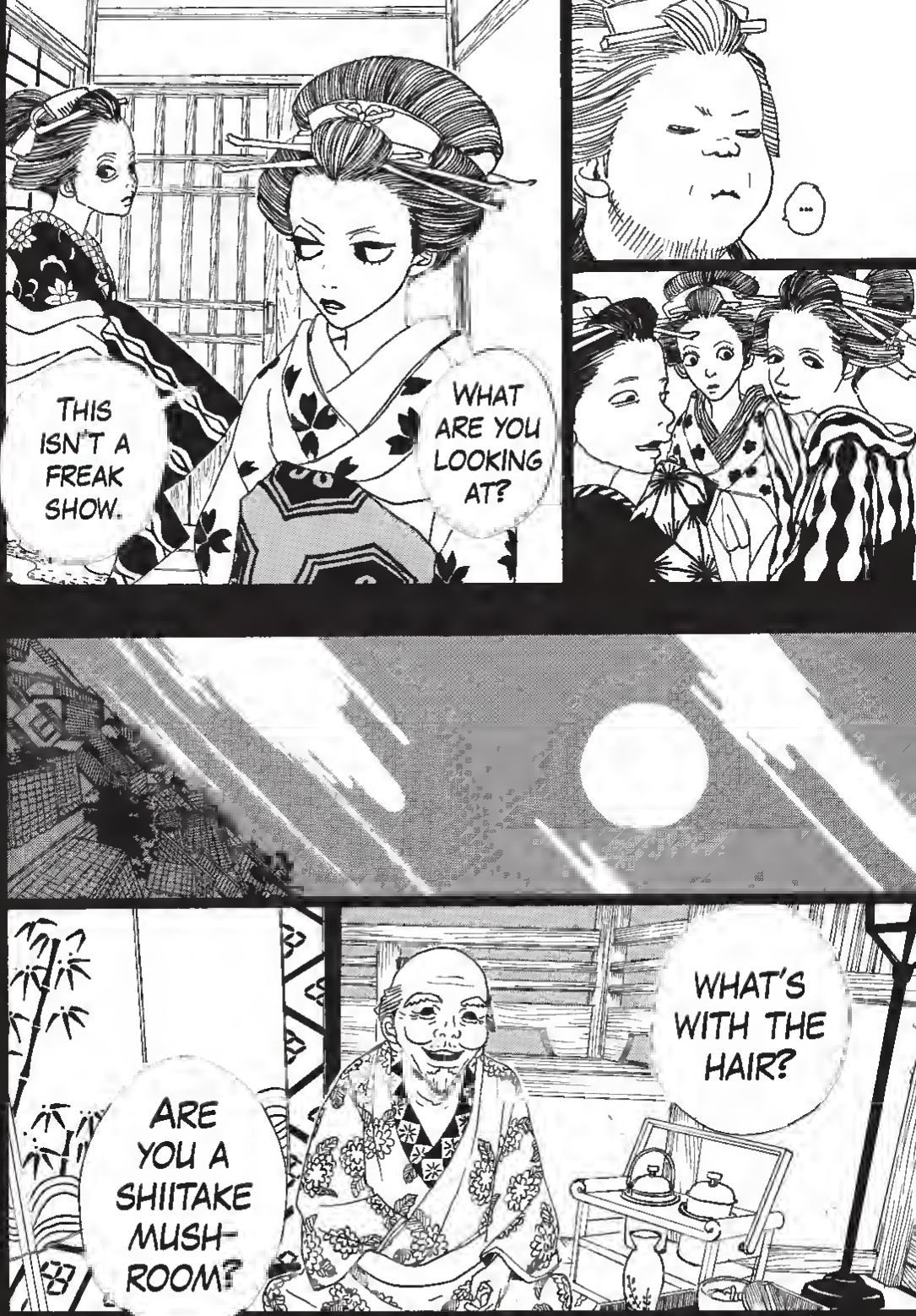
I THOUGHT I WAS GETTING AN OIRAN, BUT YOU'RE A SHINZO.
WHO'RE YOU?
OH?
I'M NOT LIKE ALL THOSE OTHER OLD GEEZERS.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE KIYOHA OR CABBAGE.
I'M KIYOHA, HERE IN HER STEAD.
YOU'RE NOISY, DROWSY, AND EAT TOO MUCH.
AND IF I LET YOU DRINK YOU'LL GO CRAZY.
I DON'T LIKE YOU SHINZO, FULL OF YOUTH, BUT NO SKILLS.

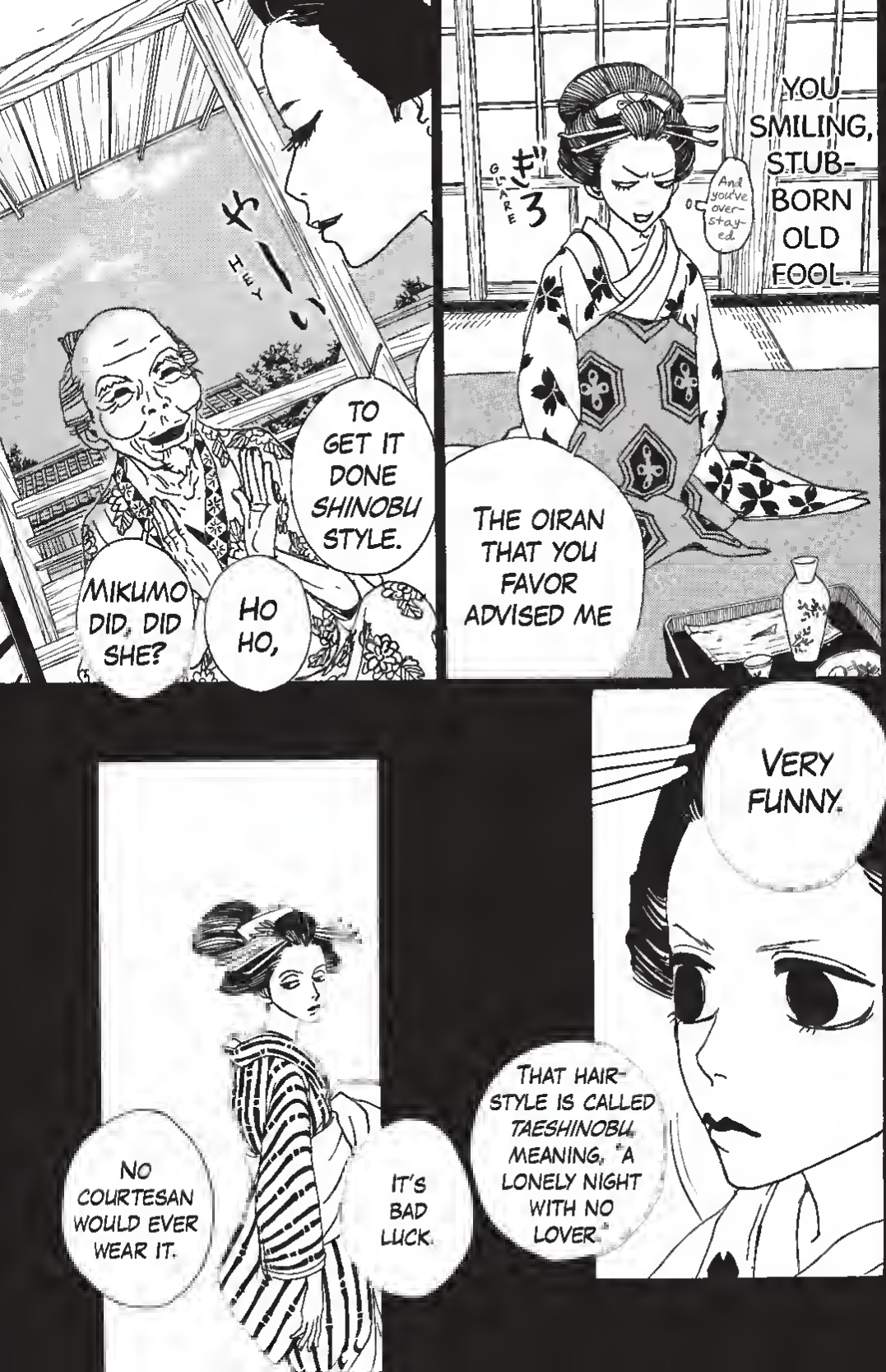
I LIKE THE ONES LIKE MIKUMO.
QUIET. YOU CAN NEVER TELL WHAT THEY'RE THINKING.
...
STOP, STOP.
IN MY HOMETOWN, WE SAY—
I'M SICK OF SUCH TALES.
にっ
GRIN
YOU SAY YOU HATE WHAT YOU REALLY LOVE.
"THOSE WHO TEASE GIRLS THEY ADMIRE ARE THE SAME AS CHILDREN."
WHAT?
SO THEY SAY.

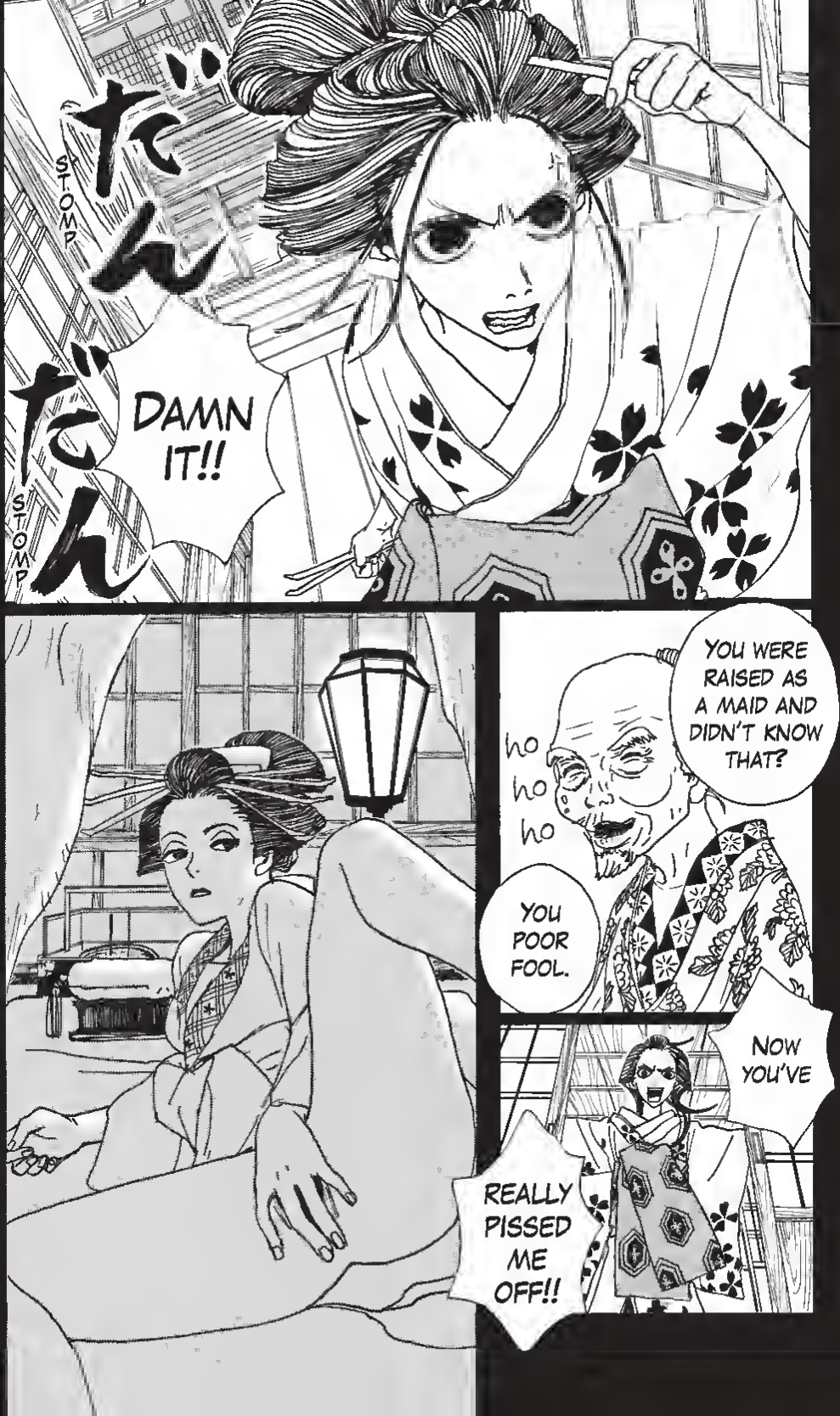

...
AH, HE'S ANGRY.
HRRM.
WHAT'S WRONG,
OLD MAN?
SISTER ...

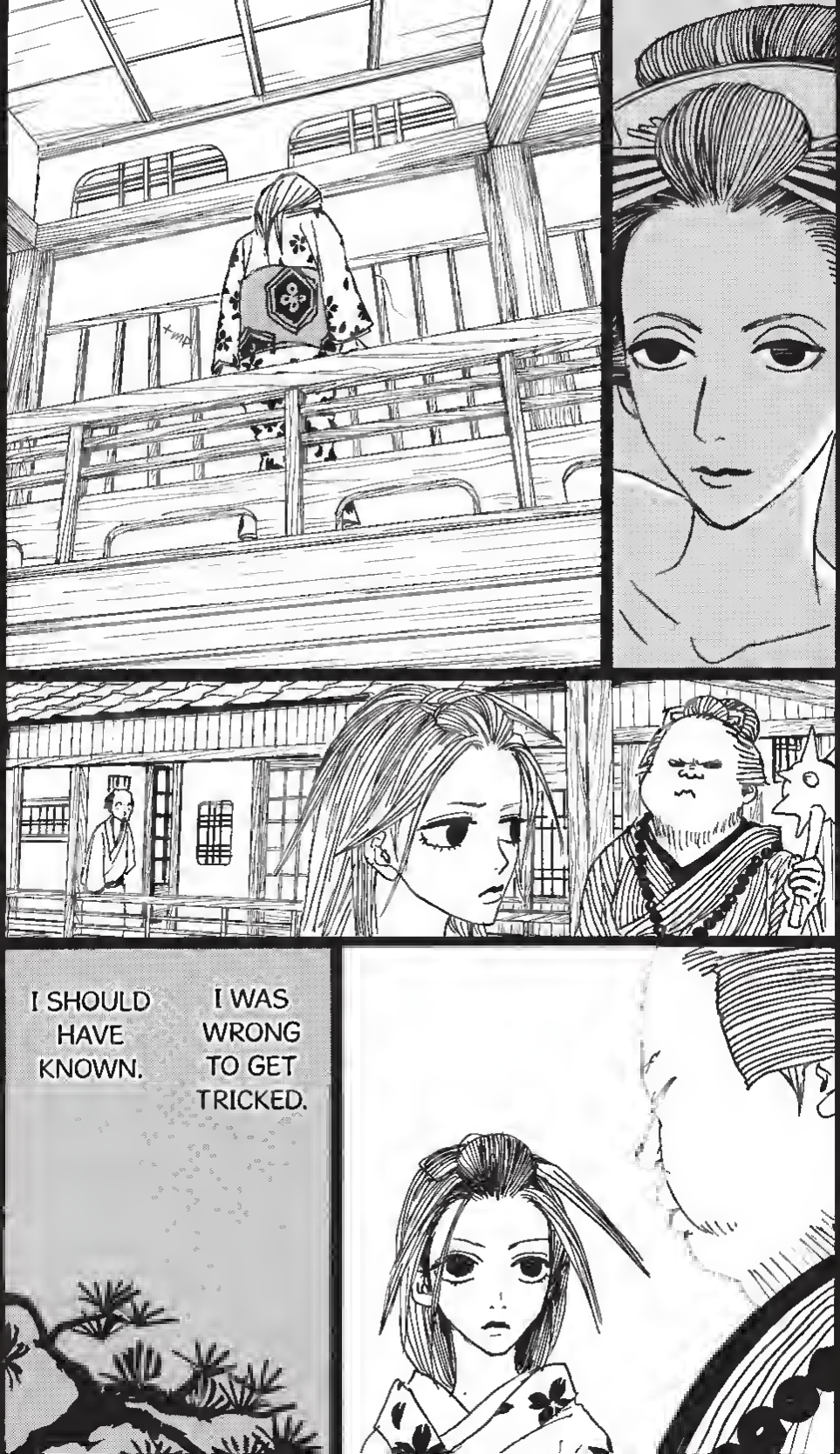
SHE CHOSE ME TO GO IN HER PLACE, BUT I JUST HURT HER REPUTATION
I HAVE TO GO APOLOGIZE TO HER...
HEY, HAIRDRESSER.
UHM, ABOUT THAT OLD MAN LAST NIGHT...
OIRAN.

GIVE HER
A SHINOBU HAIR STYLE.
...
...
I'VE HAD MY DOUBTS...
BUT MAYBE SHE REALLY IS KIND.

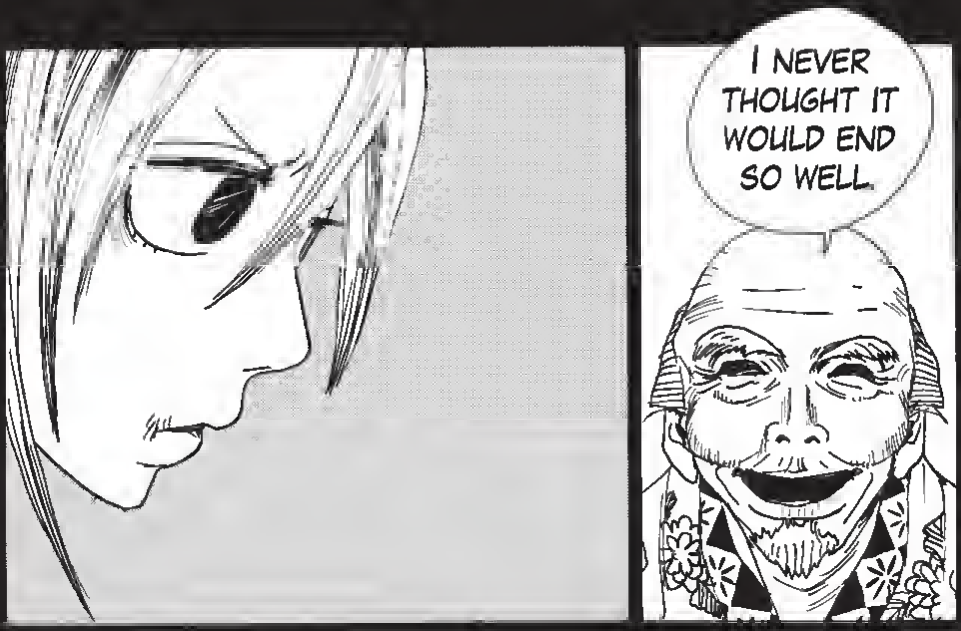

THIS ISN'T A FREAK SHOW.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
...
ARE YOU A SHIITAKE MUSH-ROOM?
WHAT'S WITH THE HAIR?


YOU-
SMILING,
STUB-
BORN
OLD
FOOL.
GLARE
ギ
3
And you've over-stayed.
THE OIRAN THAT YOU FAVOR ADVISED ME
TO GET IT DONE SHINOBU STYLE.
HO HO,
MIKUMO DID, DID SHE?
HUY
やー
VERY FUNNY.
THAT HAIR-STYLE IS CALLED TAESHINOBU, MEANING, "A LONELY NIGHT WITH NO LOVER."
IT'S BAD LUCK.
NO COURTESAN WOULD EVER WEAR IT.

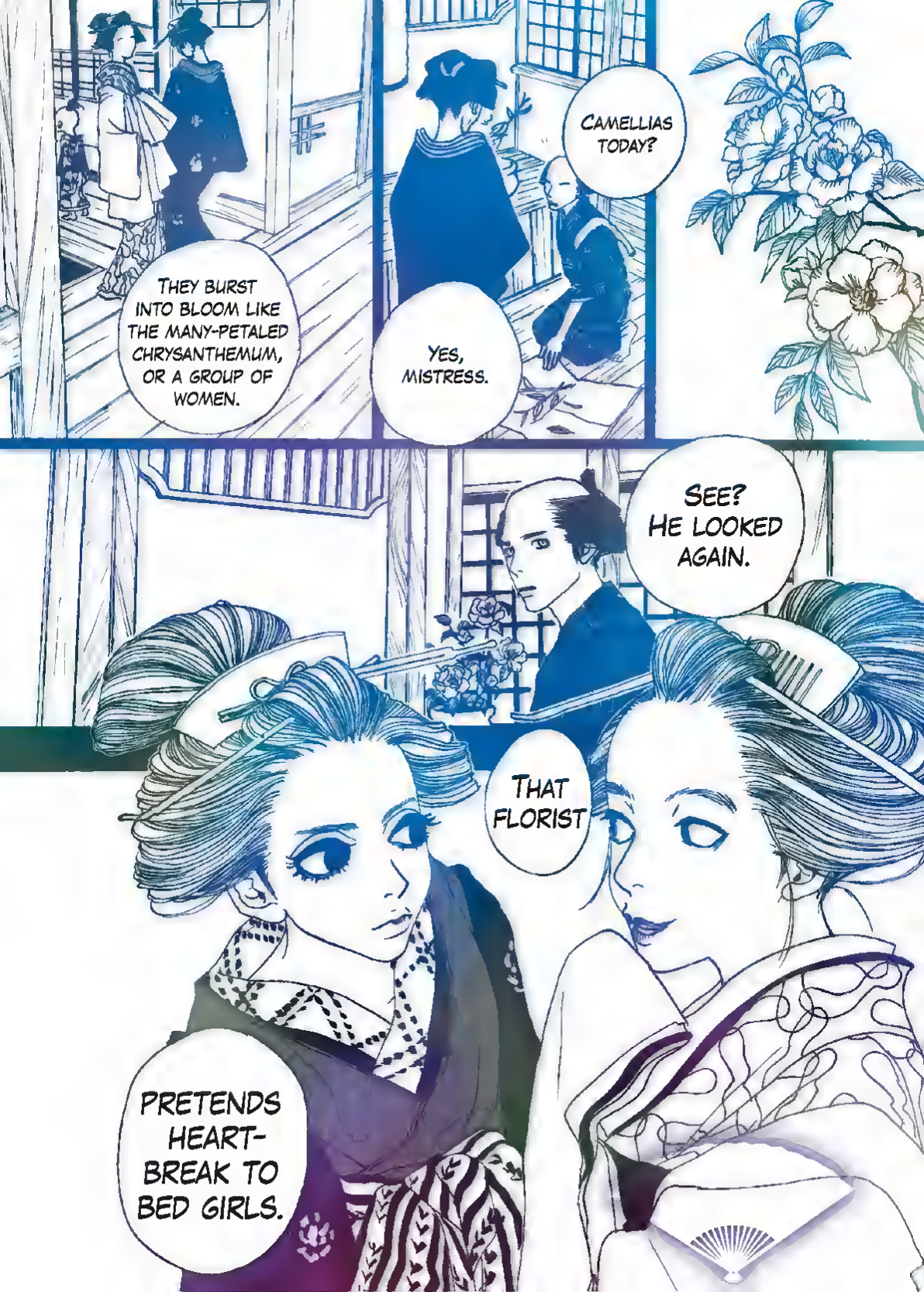

だん
STOMP
だん
STOMP
DAMN IT!!
YOU WERE RAISED AS A MAID AND DIDN'T KNOW THAT?
ho ho ho
YOU POOR FOOL.
NOW YOU'VE
REALLY PISSED ME OFF!!


I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.
I WAS WRONG TO GET TRICKED.

SO VERY NAIVE.
I'M STILL SO NAIVE.
I LOVE SHIN-ZO.
I HATE SHIN-ZO
HOW MUCH I TOTALLY ADORE YOU!
SO I KEPT TELLING HER
MIKUMO IS A VERY JEALOUS WOMAN.



CHAPTER 6 END


THEY BURST INTO BLOOM LIKE THE MANY-PETALED CHRYSANTHEMUM, OR A GROUP OF WOMEN.
YES, MISTRESS.
CAMELLIAS TODAY?
SEE? HE LOOKED AGAIN.
THAT FLORIST
PRETENDS HEART-BREAK TO BED GIRLS.

SAKURAN

OH, PLEASE.
YOU !!
DON'T PLAY DUMB.
OH? LIKE WHO?
HE WAS JUST LOOKING.
AND THAT LOOK IS MORE THAN IT SEEMS.
LAST NIGHT, WHEN UMEHA'S GUEST WENT TO THE WASHROOM
HE WANTED A GLIMPSE OF YOU IN YOUR PARLOR AND NEVER WENT BACK TO HER.
YOU FOX BITCH !!

BARK!
LAST NIGHT'S GUEST? THAT WAS...
CAUSING A RUCKUS THIS EARLY? HOW UNSEEMLY.
PUNCH
LITTLE BRAT!!
DAMN YOU,
ACK!
THAT GUY UMEHA'S HEAD-OVER-HEELS FOR.
NO WONDER SHE'S FURIOUS.
LOVE, HATE ...

SO WHAT IF HE CHOOSES TO FALL FOR ME.
IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS.
KEEP ACTING LIKE IT'S ALL IN FUN AND YOU'LL GET HURT, TOO.
THE ONES WHO GET HURT
ARE THOSE WHO FALL IN LOVE FOR REAL.
MISS MIKUMO, IF YOU WILL...

HURRY BACK.
ACTING LIKE HE'S JEALOUS OR TRYING TO MAKE HER JEALOUS...
HER SORROWFUL BEARING
IS SO SWEET...
THE ONE WHO DECEIVES THE MOST, WINS.
MAY I?
HM...

COME NOW, KIYOHA.
GIVE US A HAPPY SMILE.
I CAN'T HAVE YOU FALLING IN LOVE WITH ME.

VERY FUNNY!
わ
はは
DWA HA HA HA HA
VERY WELL, I WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU!
HOW ABOUT THIS?
OH!
"SCISSORS" !!
キャっ
SQUEEZE
キャっ
UH...
THAT WAS FAST, MIKUMO.
I-I WAS JUST
SHOWING HER SOME BASIC POSITIONS. JUST WITH MY HANDS.

YES.
RIGHT, KIYOHA?
PRETEND LOVE.

BECAUSE TRUE LOVE IS HELL.

HE'S THE MASTER OF UNREQUITED LOVE IF HE'LL FALL FOR
A HEARTLESS WENCH LIKE YOU.
BACK AGAIN, YOU NASTY OLD COOT ?
HEY, NOW. THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK TO GUESTS.
ESPECIALLY WHEN THE OTHER GIRLS DISLIKE YOU.
MIKUMO TOLD ME
YOU WERE MAKING MOVES ON HER LOVER.
NO I WASN'T.
KNOWING YOU, I'M SURE
YOU SHOWED SOME HINT OF AFFECTION FOR HIM IN YOUR DEMEANOR.

WHO?
ACTU-ALLY... THERE IS ONE...
IT'S YOU, KIND SIR.
STILL HAVEN'T REALLY FALLEN FOR A MAN YET.
YOU...
カカカッ
KACKLE
カッ
ぽかっ
THWAP
I THINK YOU'RE JEALOUS OF THOSE WHO ARE DEEPLY IN LOVE.
HMF! WHY WOULD I BE?

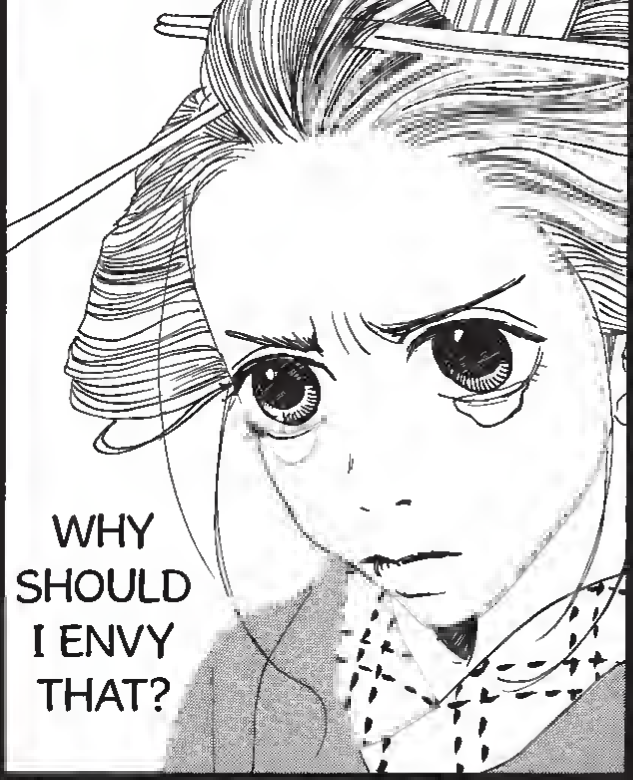
OH, MIKUMO.
THAT'S WHY YOU BUTT IN.
TAP
PLEASE, SOMEONE,
HELP ME DO THIS.

ANY-ONE!!
I WON'T DO IT.
JUST TAKE THE KETTLE AND SMASH IT DOWN.
STOP IT, UMEHA.
IT'S SO OUT OF STYLE.

YES, KIYOHA ...
I WANT YOU TO DO IT.

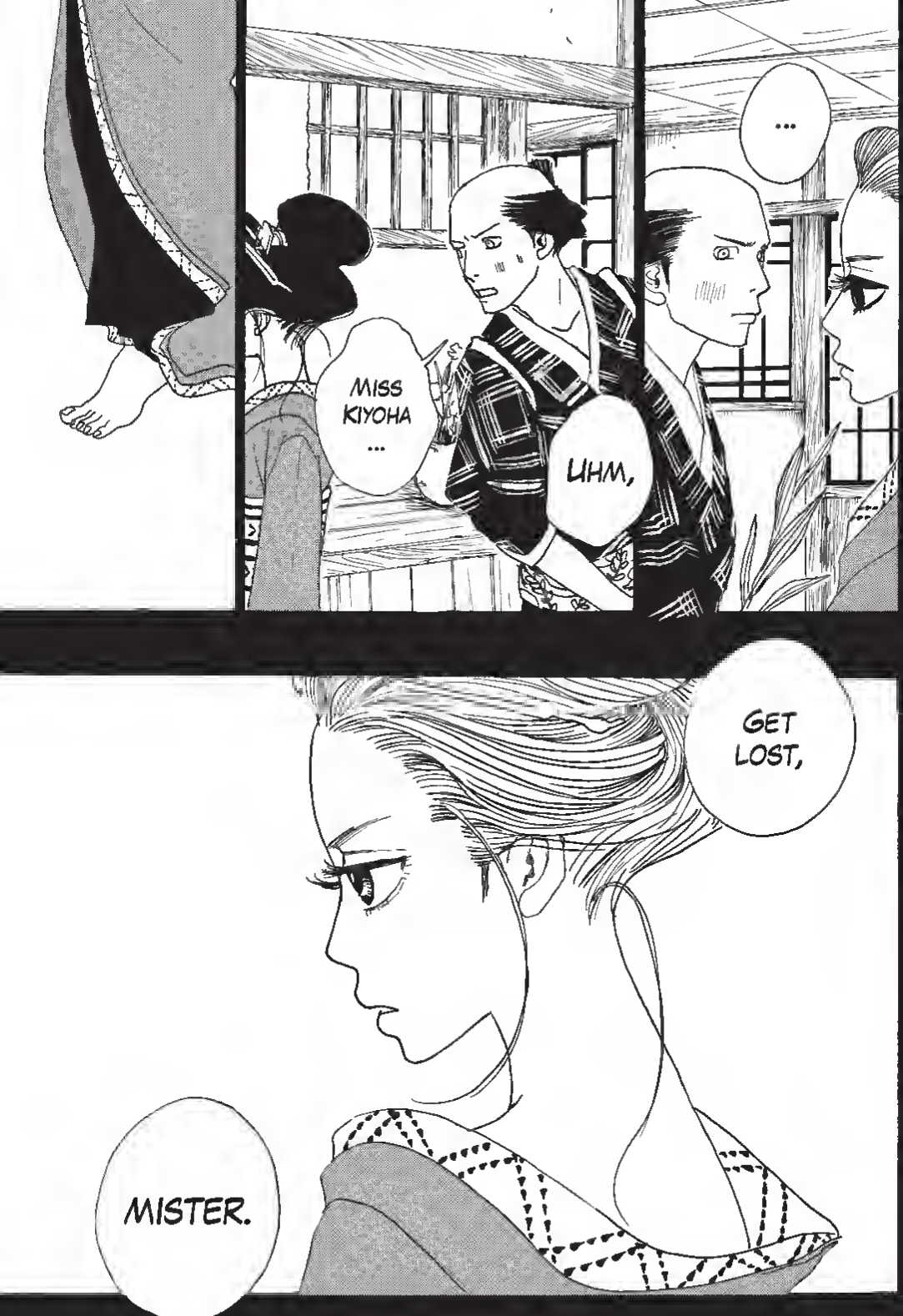
SEND THIS FINGER TO HIM.
IT'S MY OATH TO HIM.
TO BELIEVE THAT THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY TO PROVE ONE'S FEELINGS
DO IT.

ドン
KRAK



IN THIS PLACE.

THIS IS JUST ANOTHER TYPE OF AMUSEMENT


...
UHM,
MISS KIYOHA ...
GET LOST,
MISTER.

YOU CAN'T LIVE.

BUT WITH-OUT LOVE

CHAPTER 7 END

NO WONDER IT'S COLD. SNOW!
OH.
WE GOTTA CLEAN,
BUT WE'LL FREEZE TO THE BONE.
GET UP, KIYOHA!! YOU'RE THE LAST ONE IN BED!
December 13th. "Spring cleaning" to welcome the New Year.

SAKURAN
さくらん 8
Everyone in the house helped out with the cleaning.
Once it was over, we'd toss someone aloft and have an informal party.
RATS.

I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO PAYING OFF OUR OLD SCORES.
BUT SHE UP AND RAN AWAY 'CAUSE SHE'S SCARED OF ME.
CAN'T BLAME HER...
THAT OLD HAG!!
I'D RUN AWAY, TOO.
THEN LAST YEAR SHE GOT DUMPED INTO THE BATH.
THE YEAR BEFORE LAST A RAT WAS SLIPPED DOWN HER BOSOM WHEN SHE WAS HOISTED.
CURSE YOU, KIYOHA.
ACHOO
Happy happy Master Wakamatsu!
HEY!!
THEN WE'LL TOSS OLD MONEYBAGS.
hup
hup
hup
Yo!
CUT IT OUT!

TOSSING ME INTO THE POND...
WHAT A NASTY PRANK-STER!
NO ONE CAN MATCH HER LOOKS OR HER QUICK WIT.
SO SHE'S GOTTEN TOO COCKY.
I'LL PUNISH HER WELL.
IN THE NEW YEAR SHE'LL BE DEFLOW-ERED.
SHE NEEDS TO BE TRAINED.
SHE'S NOT JUST SOME MAID ANYMORE.

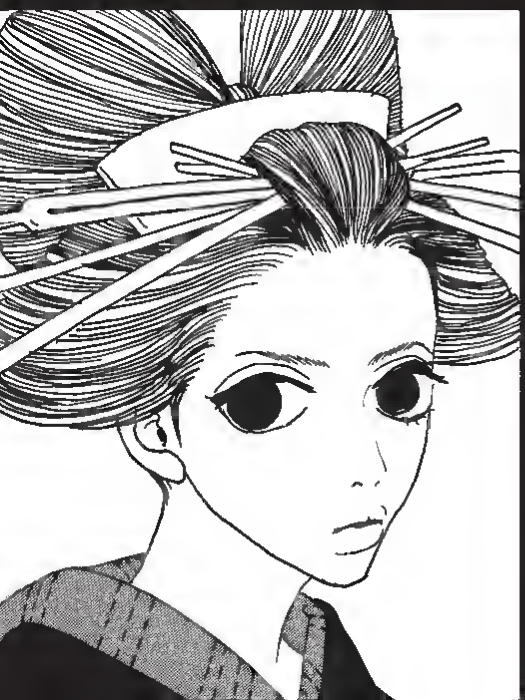
THAT
FLORIST AGAIN...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
NO-THING.
YOU'RE ONLY ENCOURAGING HIS FEELINGS.
SO WHAT...?
IF YOU WON'T HAVE HIM,
DON'T DO SUCH AN AWFUL THING.

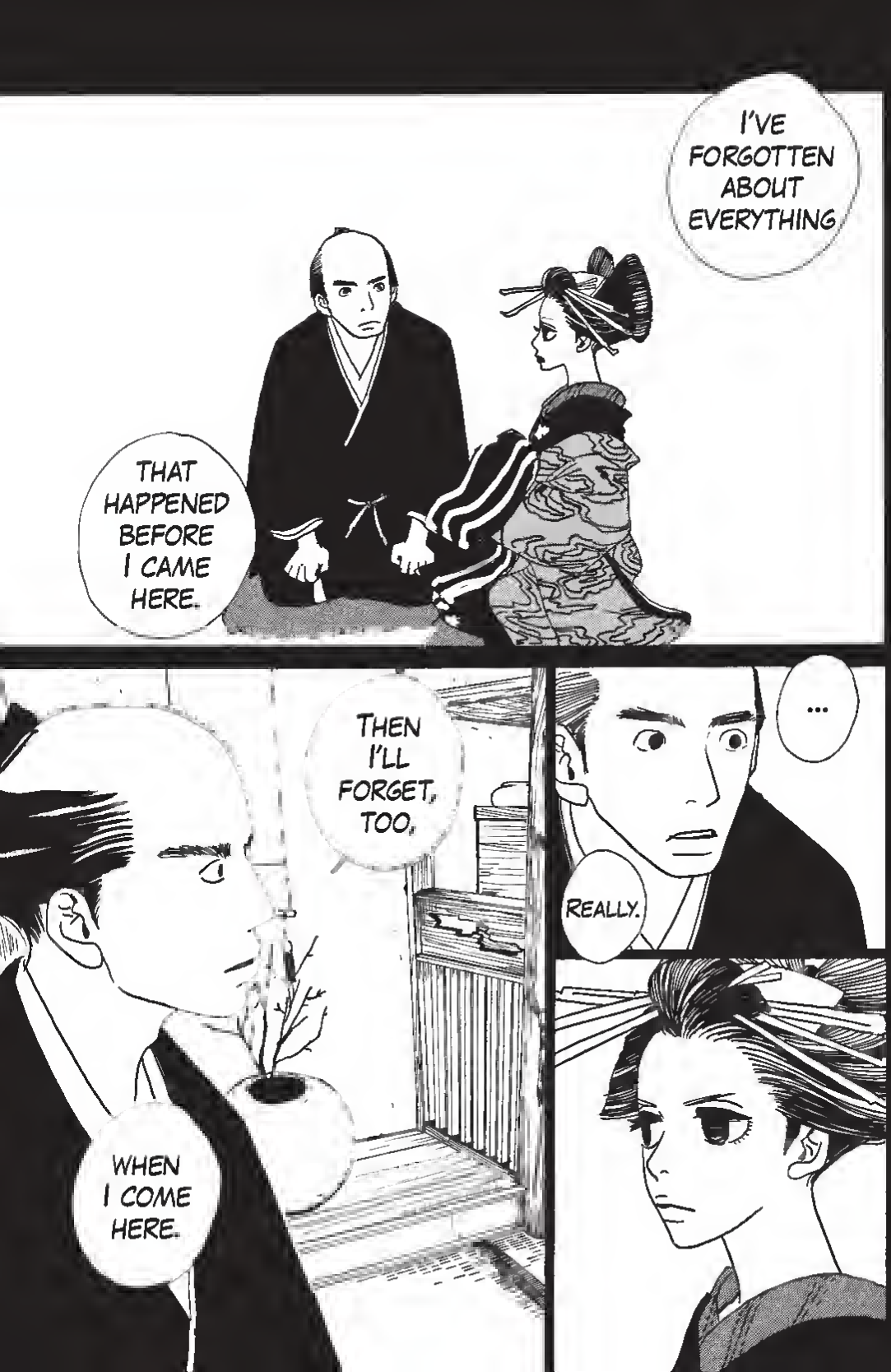
DUMMY.
JEALOUS?
I'M NOT INTERESTED IN UNRIPE FRUIT.
BATTLE OF THE BEAUTIES: MIKUMO OF TAMAGIKU
Kiyoha
Mikumo
EH?
WELL DONE!

OH...
IS KIYOHA.
I JUST BOUGHT IT. THE SHINZO NEXT TO HER
EVER SAY SOMETHING INTERESTING?
"OH"? WHY CAN'T YOU
THIS.
IT DOESN'T REALLY LOOK LIKE HER.

URINE TROUBLE.
URINE TROUBLE.
YOU'RE IN TROUBLE !!
THAT'S LIKE AN APE PEEING IN A TREE.
AT THIS RATE HE'LL FALL FOR SOME HARLOT AND RUIN HIMSELF.
SINCE HE WAS RAISED WITH KID GLOVES AS THE ELDEST SON OF THE FAMILY.
HE'S THE MOST UPTIGHT OF ALL MY NEPHEWS.



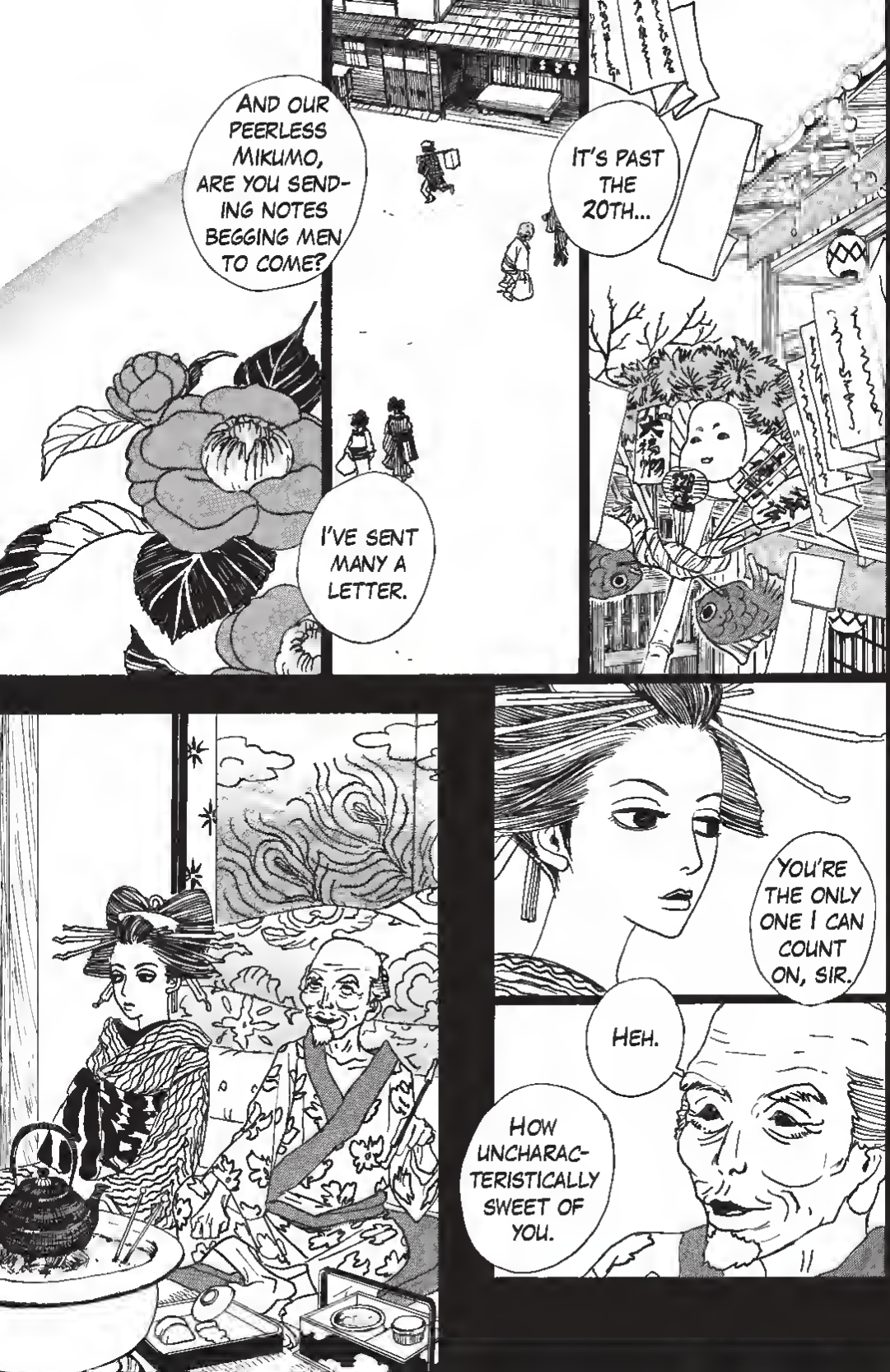
ARE YOU HAVING FUN?
SORRY, I'M JUST NOT USED TO JOKES LIKE THIS.
ソレソレ
THAT'S IT!
BWA HA HA HA
わはは
...
I'VE NEVER EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
YES.
...
WELL THEN, THE SNOW MUST MAKE YOU MISS HOME.
UP NORTH ...
WHERE ARE YOU FROM?


I'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT EVERYTHING
THAT HAPPENED BEFORE I CAME HERE.
...
REALLY.
THEN I'LL FORGET, TOO.
WHEN I COME HERE.

I FELT IT ALL THE WAY TO MY SPINE.

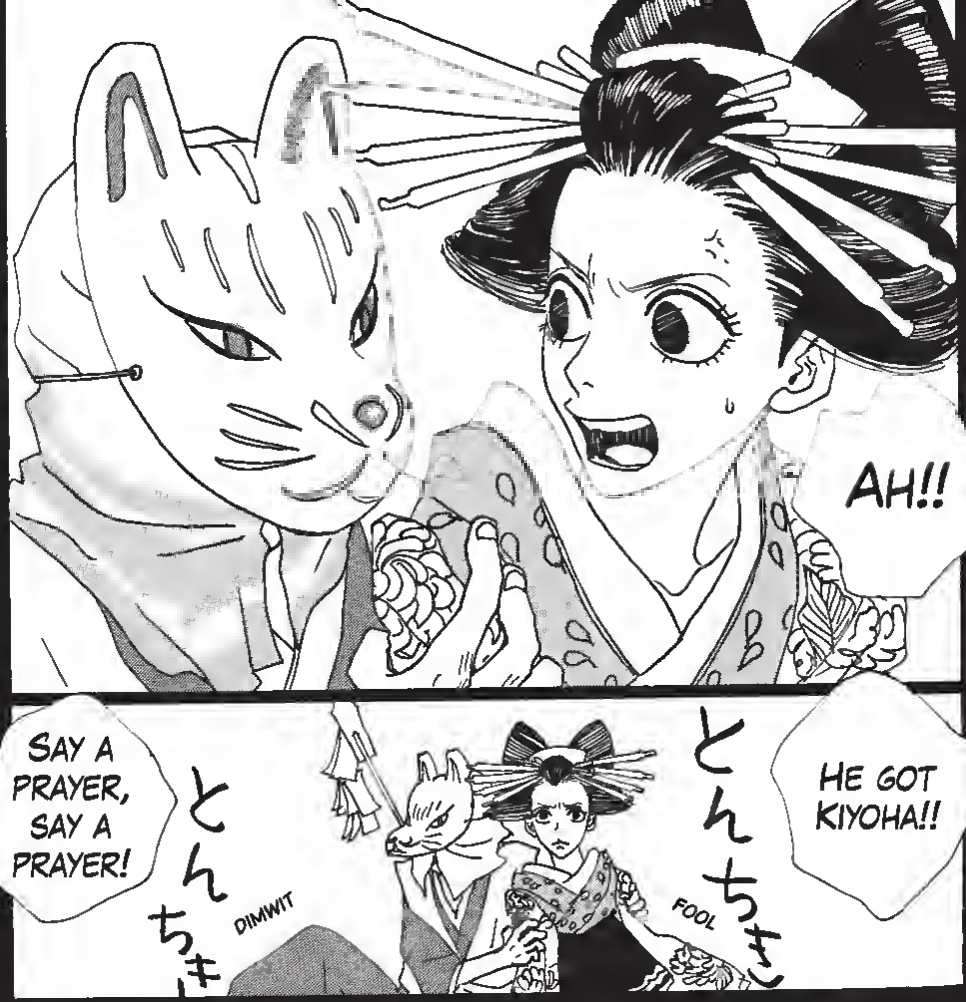
BUT WHEN MY HAND TOUCHED HIS,

I DIDN'T FEEL ANYTHING WHEN I BRUSHED OFF THE Fflorist'S SHOULDER,

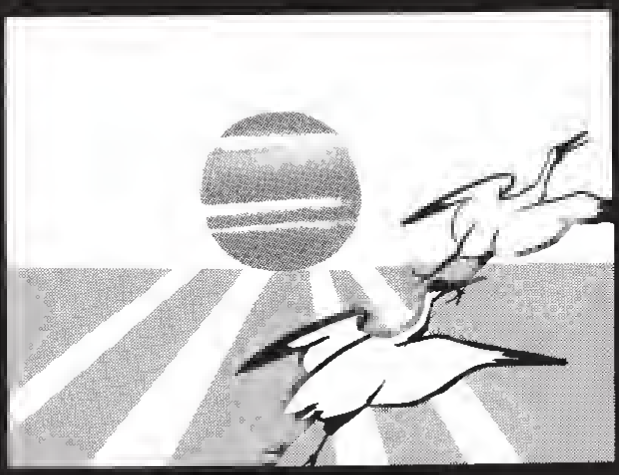

AND OUR PEERLESS MIKUMO, ARE YOU SENDING NOTES BEGGING MEN TO COME?
IT'S PAST THE 20TH...
I'VE SENT MANY A LETTER.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN COUNT ON, SIR.
HEH.
HOW UNCHARACTERISTICALLY SWEET OF YOU.

I HEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, MASTER WAKASAYA, BUT...
NO, I'VE DECIDED.
I'VE LOOKED AFTER HER SINCE HER DEBUT AS A SHINZO.
I'LL BE HER FIRST CLIENT.
I'VE ALREADY TALKED IT OVER WITH MIKUMO.
AH...
EXCUSE ME.

heh
GRINNING LIKE A FOOL
TO DEFLOWER KIYOHA.
WHY DO YOU BALK?
YOU SEE.
MASTER KONOYA WISHES
ごーん
GONG
IT'S THE FOX DANCE!
HEY!
IF HE CATCHES YOU, YOU'LL GET PREGNANT!
THE FOX IS COMING!



THEY SAY IF YOU EAT THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SEASON YOU'LL LIVE 75 DAYS LONGER. THAT'S WHAT BROUGHT THE MEN IN.



I'LL BE 17 IN THE NEW YEAR.

CHAPTER 8 END

9
SAKURAN

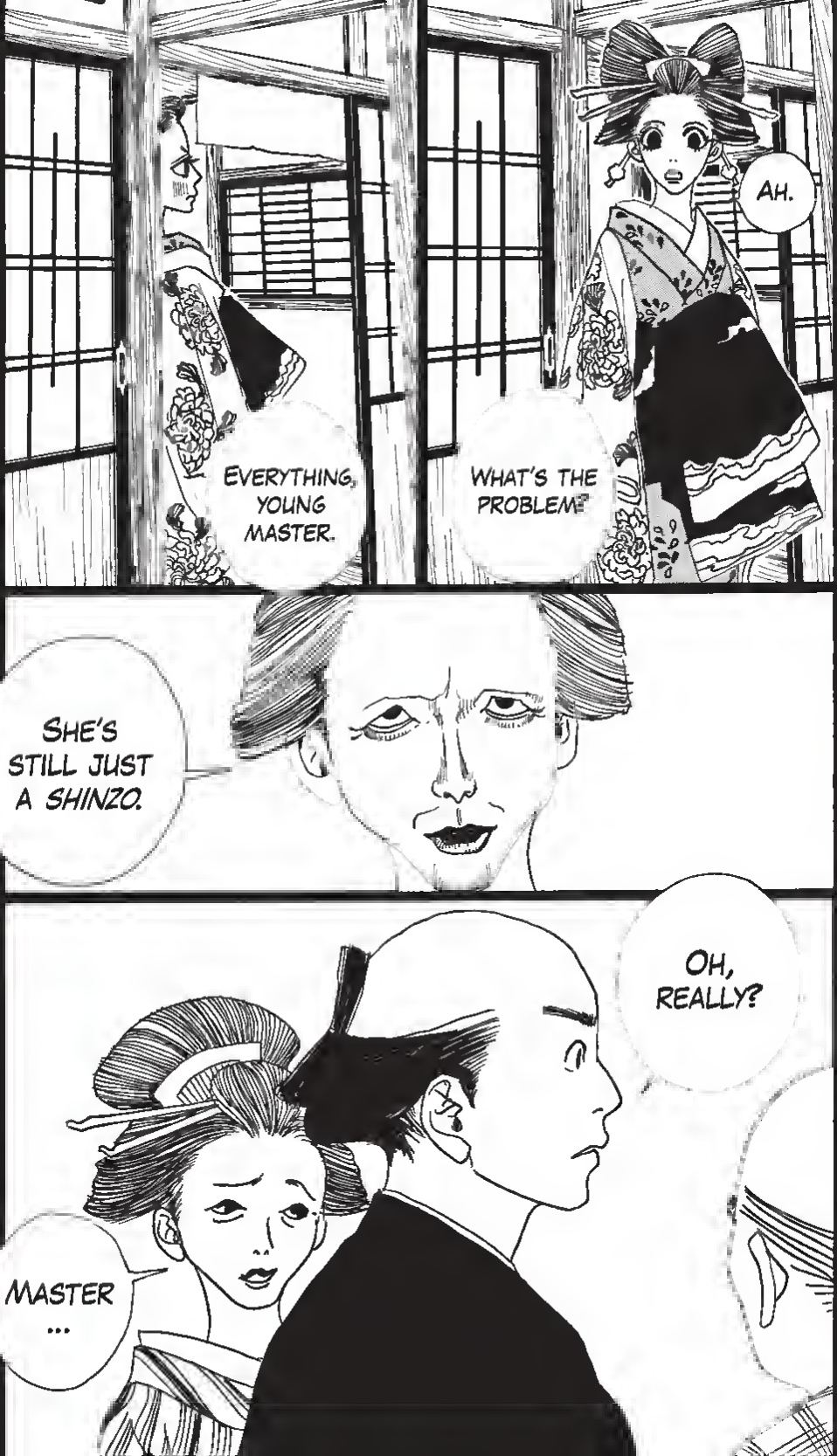
AH, I'M COMING!
UHN, UHN.
OOH!
THERE!
UH...
MORE... MORE...
AH!
They carry on like that because the men like it.
AHH... NO...
AH!
The girls don't cry out because they're having a good time.

あっ UNH
あん UNH
あん UNH
MISS KIYOHA.
WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING AT?
THE MOON...
SAY A PRAYER TO THE FULL MOON
AND IT'LL BE ANSWERED.

BEING TOP OIRAN ISN'T BAD, BUT...
OH!
AND GET BOUGHT OUT BY A REALLY RICH MAN!
I WANT A VELVET FUTON 5 MATS THICK, AND REALLY PRETTY CLOTHES!
I WANNA BE THE TOP OIRAN!
I WONDER WHAT HIS NAME IS...

FIRM, TIGHT, GOOD COLOR...
IT'D TAKE ANOTHER 10 YEARS TO FIND SUCH HEAVENLY GOODS AGAIN.
I'M MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN THAT.
MEN WILL WEEP WITH JOY TO DISCOVER SUCH A PRIZE UNDER THAT VIRGINAL FACADE OF YOURS.
MN!
LISTEN.
AND "OH, MASTER, YOU'RE SO GOOD"
"YES, YES, THERE!"
AND THEN I'LL SAY,
AND THROW MY HEAD BACK AND GASP, RIGHT?

DON'T FORCE YOUR CRIES.
LET THEM COME NATURALLY.
THAT WON'T DO!
ALL OF MIKUMO OIRAN'S GUESTS SAY THEY LOVE
HOW SHE ONLY RARELY MAKES A SOUND.
SINCE SHE ONLY CRIES OUT WHEN IT'S JUST TOO MUCH AND SHE CAN'T TAKE IT, AND THAT...

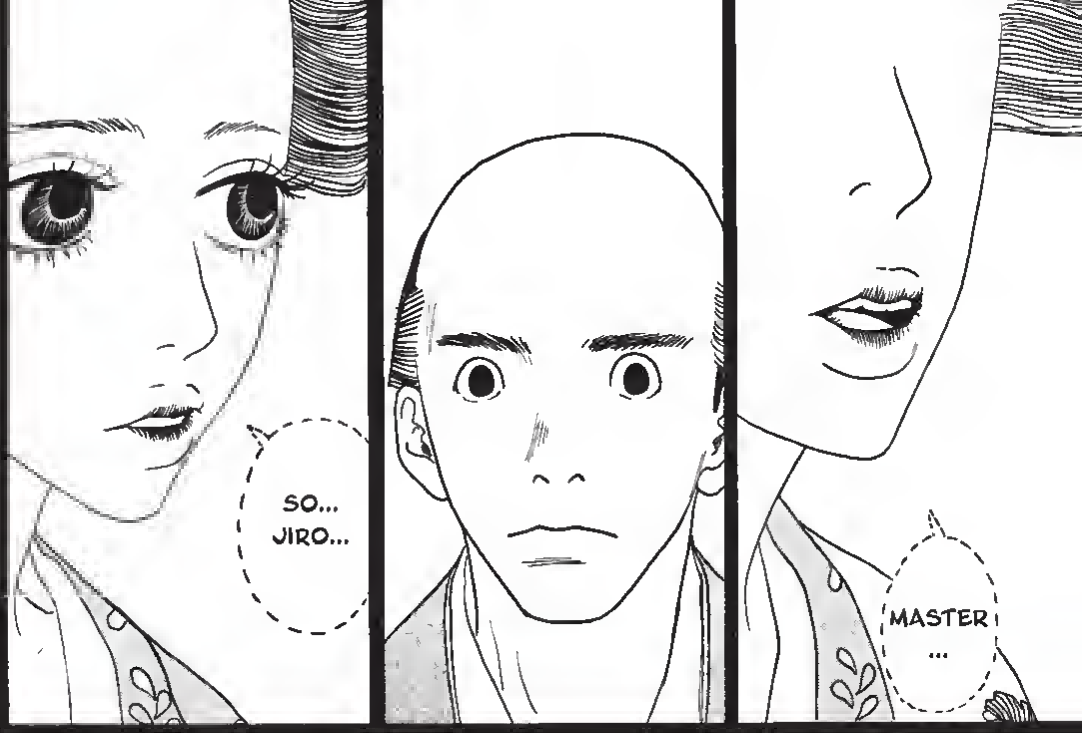

AH.
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
EVERYTHING, YOUNG MASTER.
SHE'S STILL JUST A SHINZO.
OH, REALLY?
MASTER ...

SHINZO CANNOT ACCEPT GUESTS.
BESIDES, YOU WERE HERE FOR MIKUMO OIRAN.
MIKUMO? WHO'S THAT?
THE GIRL WHO WAS WITH
MASTER WAKA-SAYA...
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING SO I DON'T REMEMBER HER.
I CAME HERE BECAUSE
I WANT TO SEE KIYOHA.
...IS WHAT HE SAYS.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

GOOD THING MR. WAKASAYA'S HERE.
KIYOHA! KIYOHA!!
YOU'RE WANTED AS A PROXY.
THAT SHOULD SATISFY MIKUMO.
I HEARD THERE'S A BUNCH OF RULES,

BUT THIS PLACE SURE IS CONFUSING,
RIGHT?
gulp
WHAT'S WRONG? SIT.
LAST TIME, I LEFT BEFORE I TOLD YOU MY NAME.
THAT BOTHERED ME.
I COULDN'T STAND IT IF YOU JUST CALLED ME BY A RANDOM NAME.

THAT'S WHAT I CAME HERE TO SAY.



DON'T FORCE IT. LET IT COME NATU-RALLY.

IT'S OKAY.
I WON'T DO ANYTHING
TO GET YOU IN TROUBLE.

!!
LIKE THIS,
THROUGH YOUR CLOTHES ...
ha ha ha
...

AH...
UH OH.
LOOK. SHE SEEMS TOTALLY BORED.
HE PROBABLY CAME TO GOSSIP. KIYOHA WON'T PUT UP WITH HIM.
IS HE LEAVING ALREADY?
YES.

IF HE ACTUALLY CAME BACK.

AND I'D GO MADDER STILL

CHAPTER 9 END

10
SAKURAN

SO,
THAT'S THAT.
かっは PUFF
AH, GOING ALREADY, MISTER WAKA-SAYA?
どすどす THUD THUD
CURSE THAT ROTTEN OLD BASTARD
SNEAKING THAT ARRANGE-MENT BY ME.
I WAS THE ONE
THAT WAS GONNA TAKE KIYOHA FIRST!!

MASTER KONOYA? HE'S SPENT MANY A NIGHT IN THE QUARTER SINCE HE WAS A YOUNG MAN.
HO HO.
YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY.
JUST LIE BACK AND CLOSE YOUR EYES.

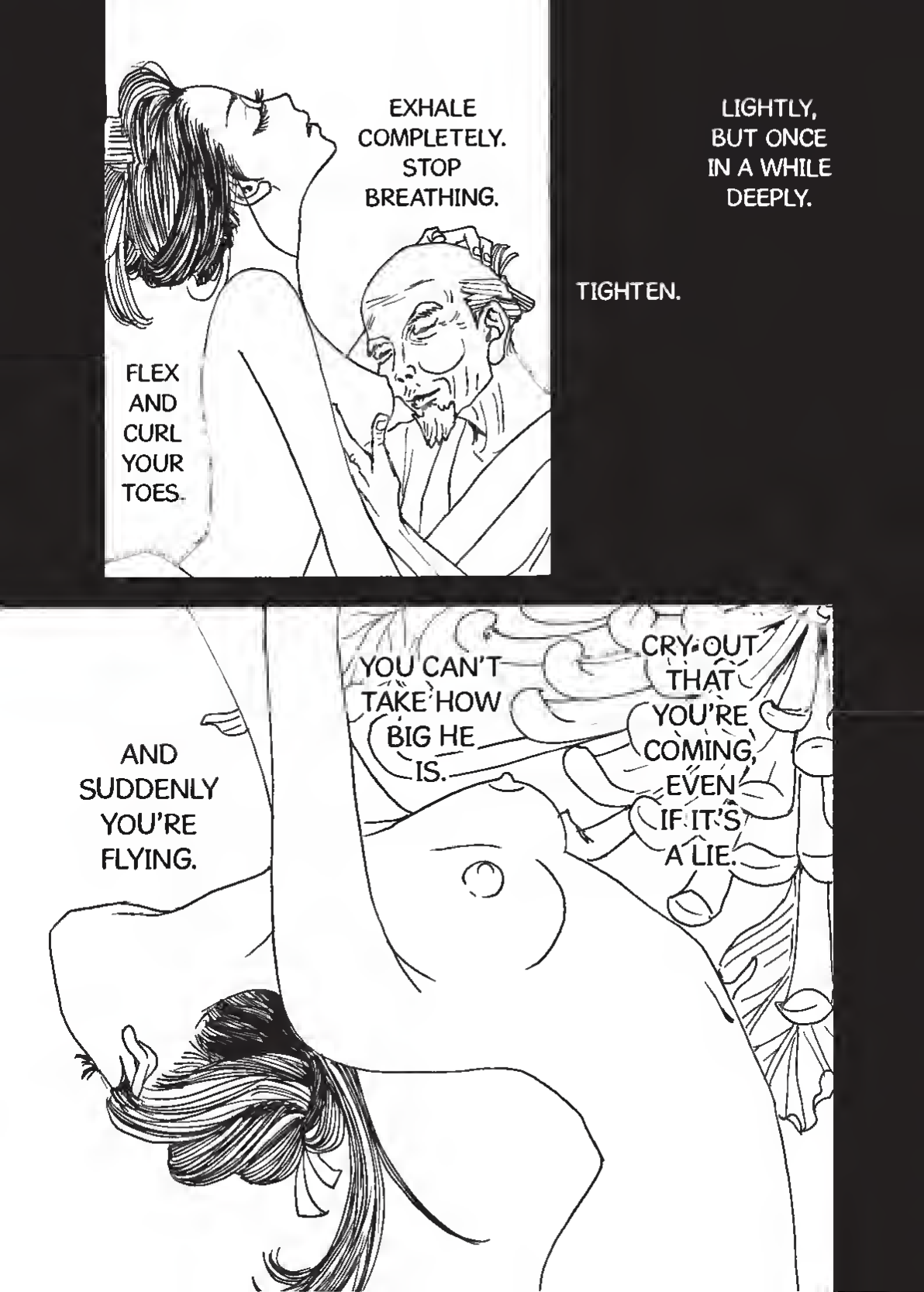
I'D WORRY THAT IF I CLOSED MY EYES
HE'D DOZE OFF.
LIE STILL AND DON'T DO ANY-THING.
JUST LET HIM DO AS HE WANTS.
THE OLD MAN LIKES VERY MEEK GIRLS.
AH... MIKUMO OIRAN.

JUST LET HIM...
REALLY ?

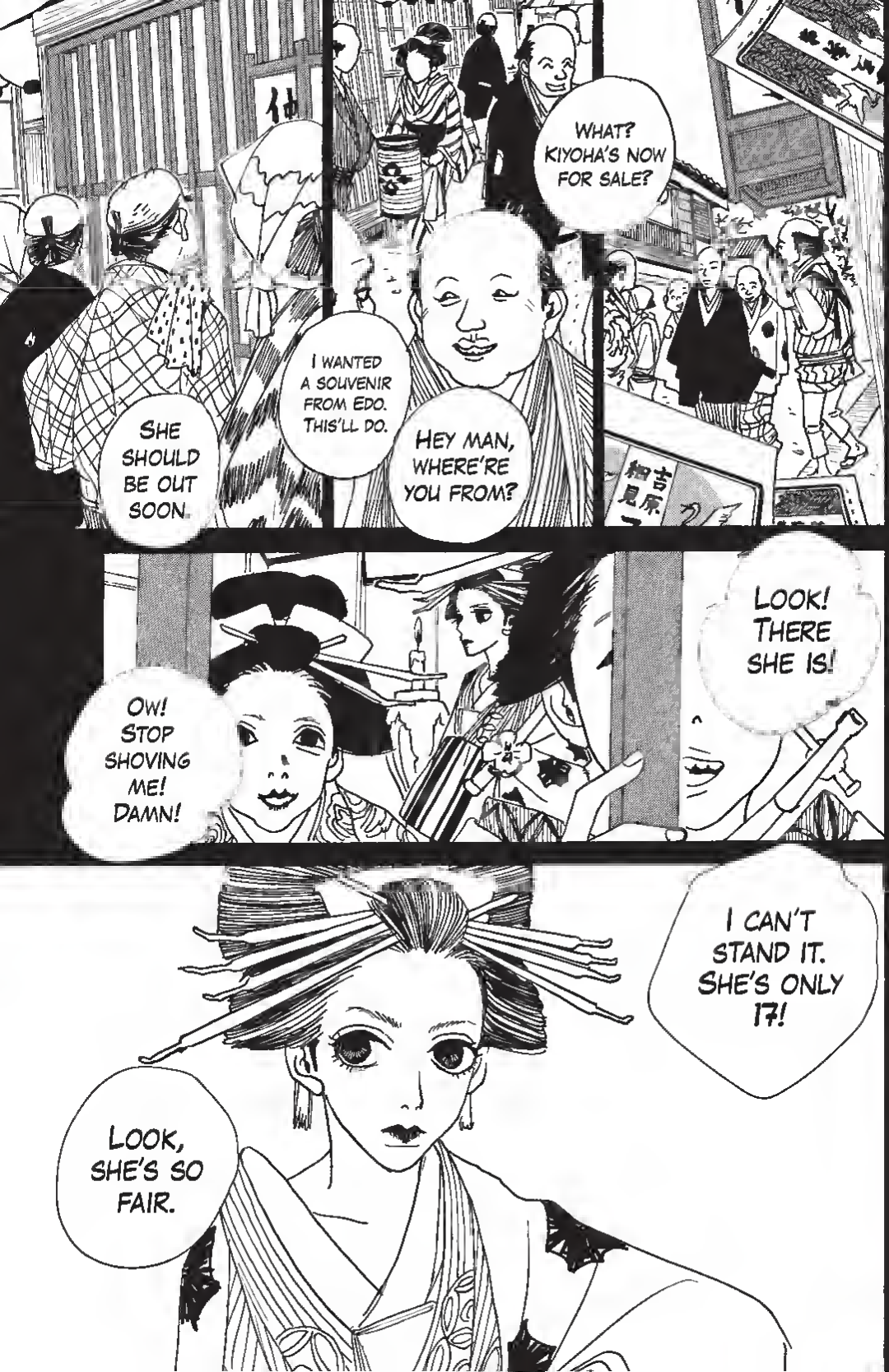
WSHT
すっ

YOU SMELL GOOD.
DAISY.
UPSIE
KIYOHA.
YOU'RE EXCEL-LENT.

I'LL SHOW YOU
DON'T GET PISSY.
HOW SO? YOU'RE ALWAYS SO MEAN TO ME.
THE WAYS IN WHICH YOU EXCEL.


EXHALE COMPLETELY. STOP BREATHING.
LIGHTLY, BUT ONCE IN A WHILE DEEPLY.
TIGHTEN.
FLEX AND CURL YOUR TOES.
AND SUDDENLY YOU'RE FLYING.
YOU CAN'T TAKE HOW BIG HE IS.
CRY OUT THAT YOU'RE COMING, EVEN IF IT'S A LIE.

WHAT? YOU'RE TOO HONEST.
YOU WERE A VIRGIN?
I THOUGHT SOME YOUNG BUCK HAD ALREADY GOTTEN TO YOU.
NO, YOU WERE
MY FIRST.


SHE SHOULD BE OUT SOON.
I WANTED A SOUVENIR FROM EDO. THIS'LL DO.
HEY MAN, WHERE'RE YOU FROM?
WHAT? KIYOHA'S NOW FOR SALE?
OW! STOP SHOVING ME! DAMN!
LOOK! THERE SHE IS!
LOOK, SHE'S SO FAIR.
I CAN'T STAND IT. SHE'S ONLY 17!

SHE'S VERY POPULAR.
THERE'S A LINE OUT THE DOOR EVERY DAY.
AH, SORRY, SHE'S UNAVAILABLE AT THE MOMENT.
KIHOYA?
YOU...
DON'T BE STUPID. I WAS HER FIRST.
I WAS HER VERY FIRST MAN.

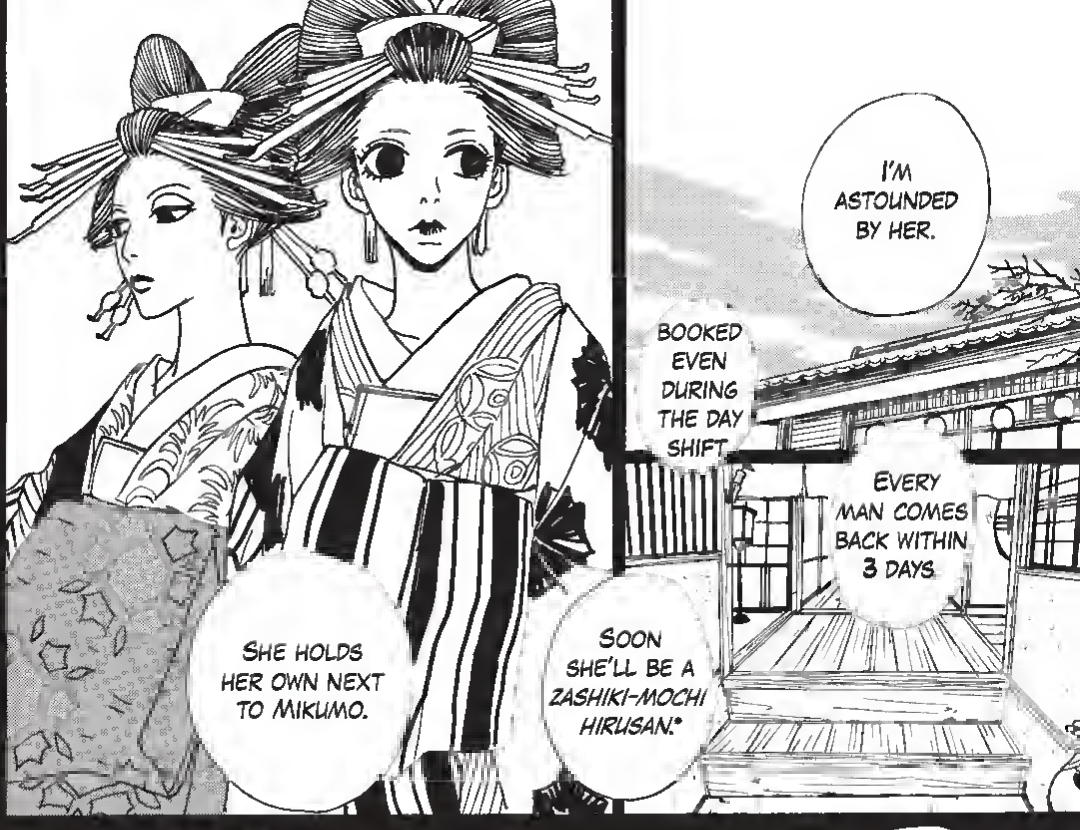
YOU SEEM HAUGHTY.
BUT IN PRIVATE YOU'RE ADORABLE.
CAN'T PLAY THE HARP, THOUGH.
BUT SHE'LL BEAT YOU AT CHESS.
NAH, YOU SHOULD HEAR HER SING.
SHE'S QUICK-WITTED.

LIGHTLY, ONCE. GENTLY FLICK THE HEAD WITH YOUR TONGUE.

PULL IT NEARLY OUT OF YOUR MOUTH, CLOSE YOUR LIPS AROUND THE HEAD. DEEPLY, NINE TIMES.

KIYOHA !!
STILL NO KIYOHA?
SHE LOOKS INNOCENT,
BUT SHE'S A HELLCAT IN BED.
SKRAPE SKRAPE
THANKS! 'SCUSE ME.
GONNA WASH UP.
And she still has no manners.

BUT I KNOW ALL THE TRICKS.

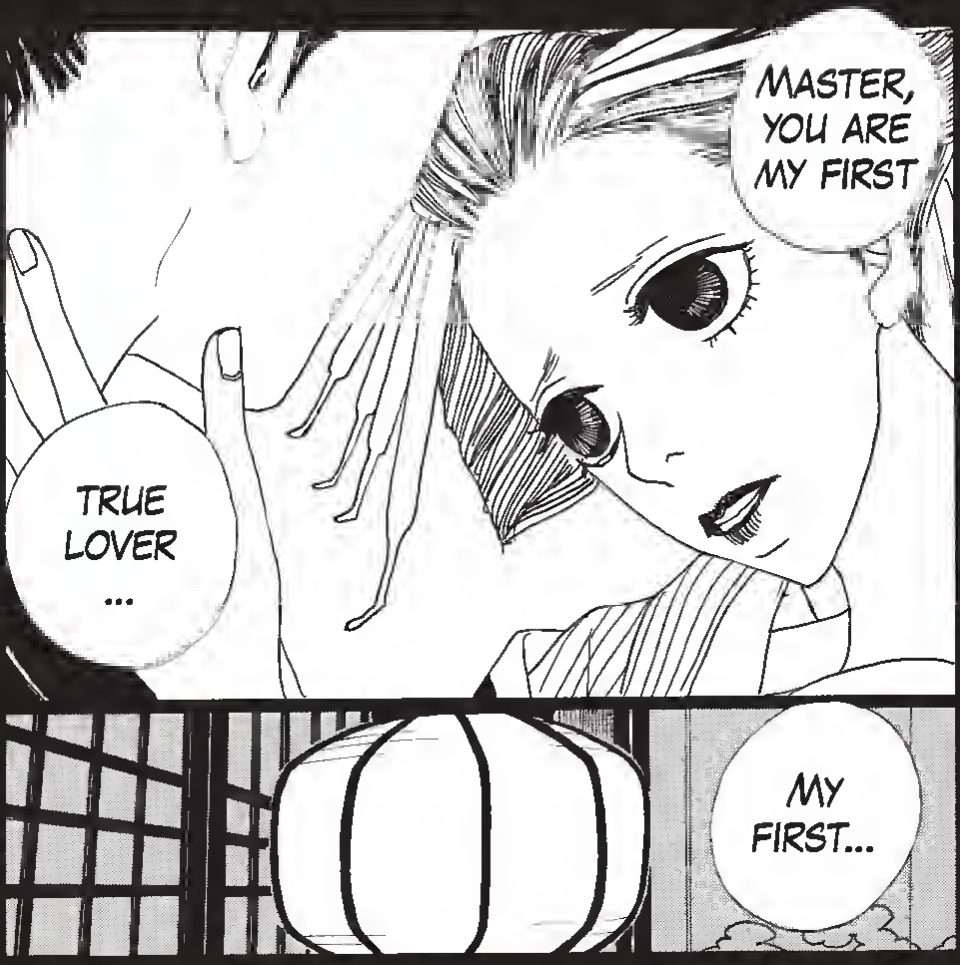

I'M ASTOUNDED BY HER.
BOOKED EVEN DURING THE DAY SHIFT.
EVERY MAN COMES BACK WITHIN 3 DAYS.
SOON SHE'LL BE A ZASHIKI-MOCHI HIRUSAN.*
SHE HOLDS HER OWN NEXT TO MIKUMO.

WELL THEN,
WE GOTTA RANK HER ACCORDINGLY.

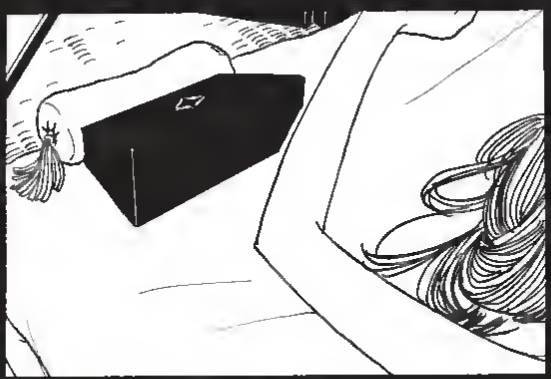
MASTER SOJIRO !!
WELL, WELL. YOU'D NEVER GUESS KIYOHA
WOULD FALL FOR A GUY LIKE THAT.

LONG TIME NO SEE.
IT'S BEEN 3 MONTHS ...
WHY? I PROMISED YOU.
WHAT A SHOCK...
THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER COME.
I MISSED YOU.

...
ME, TOO...
THE THOUGHT OF YOU WITH OTHER MEN
MADE ME ABSOLUTELY FURIOUS.



YET THEY BECOME ENSNARED IN THEIR OWN TRAPS.



CASTLE-TOPPLERS WHISPER HONEYED PHRASES TO TRAP THEIR GUESTS.

CHAPTER 10 END

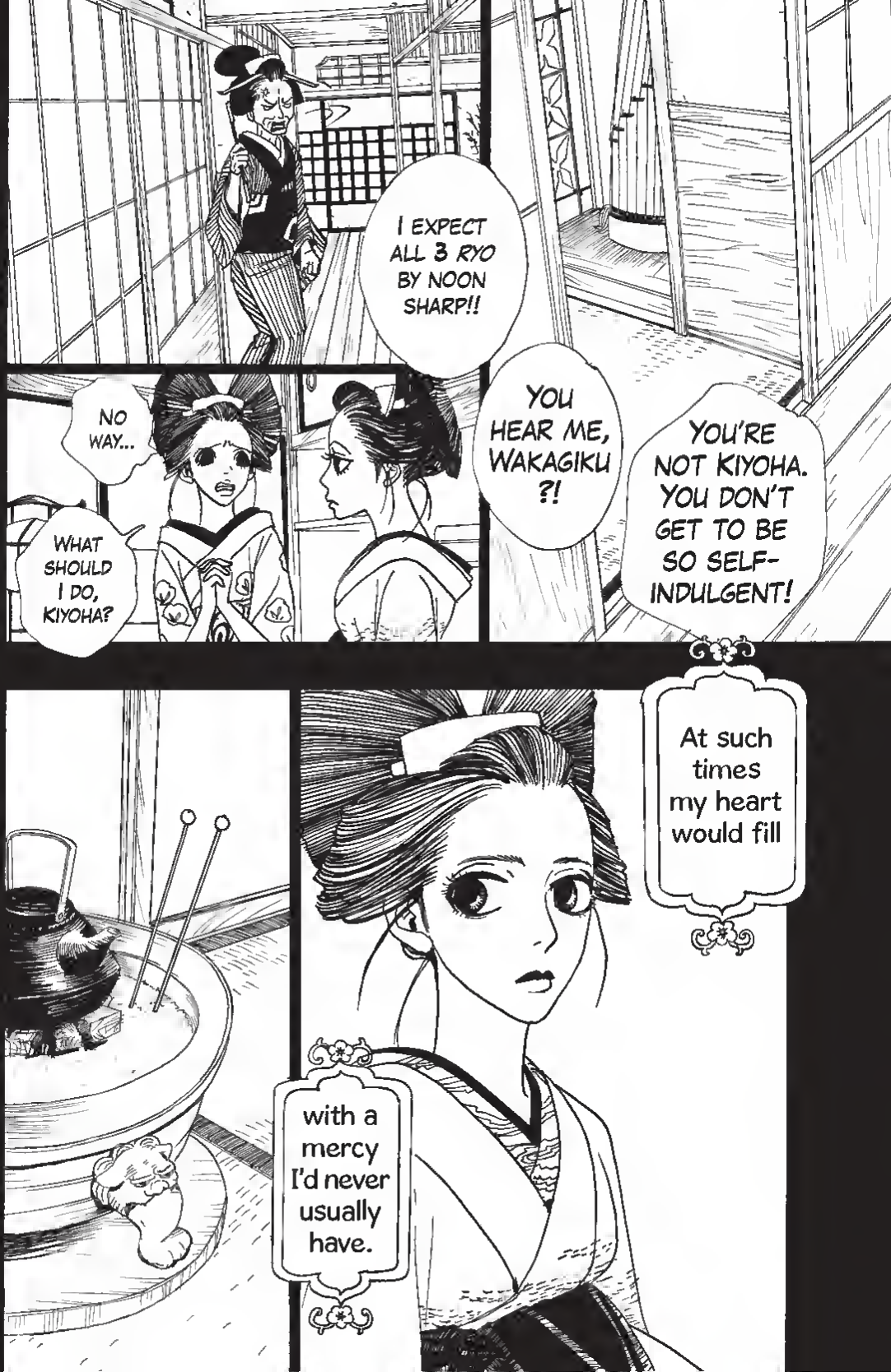
さくらん

11

SAKURAN

SEE YOU, KIYOHA.
When Sojiro is here, I'm in ecstasy.
...
When he leaves, all I think about is his return.

I CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MONEY YOU STILL OWE ME?
HEY, WAKAGIKU!
YOU GOTTA PAY ME BACK SOMEHOW.
YOU CAN'T EVEN AFFORD TO PAY THE HAIR-DRESSER!
I'M GONNA PAWN EVERYTHING YOU OWN!
THAT HARP LOOKS LIKE IT'D FETCH A GOOD PRICE.
OH, THAT'S...


I EXPECT ALL 3 RYO BY NOON SHARP!!
YOU HEAR ME, WAKAGIKU ?!
YOU'RE NOT KIYOHA. YOU DON'T GET TO BE SO SELF-INDULGENT!
NO WAY...
WHAT SHOULD I DO, KIYOHA?
At such times my heart would fill
with a mercy I'd never usually have.

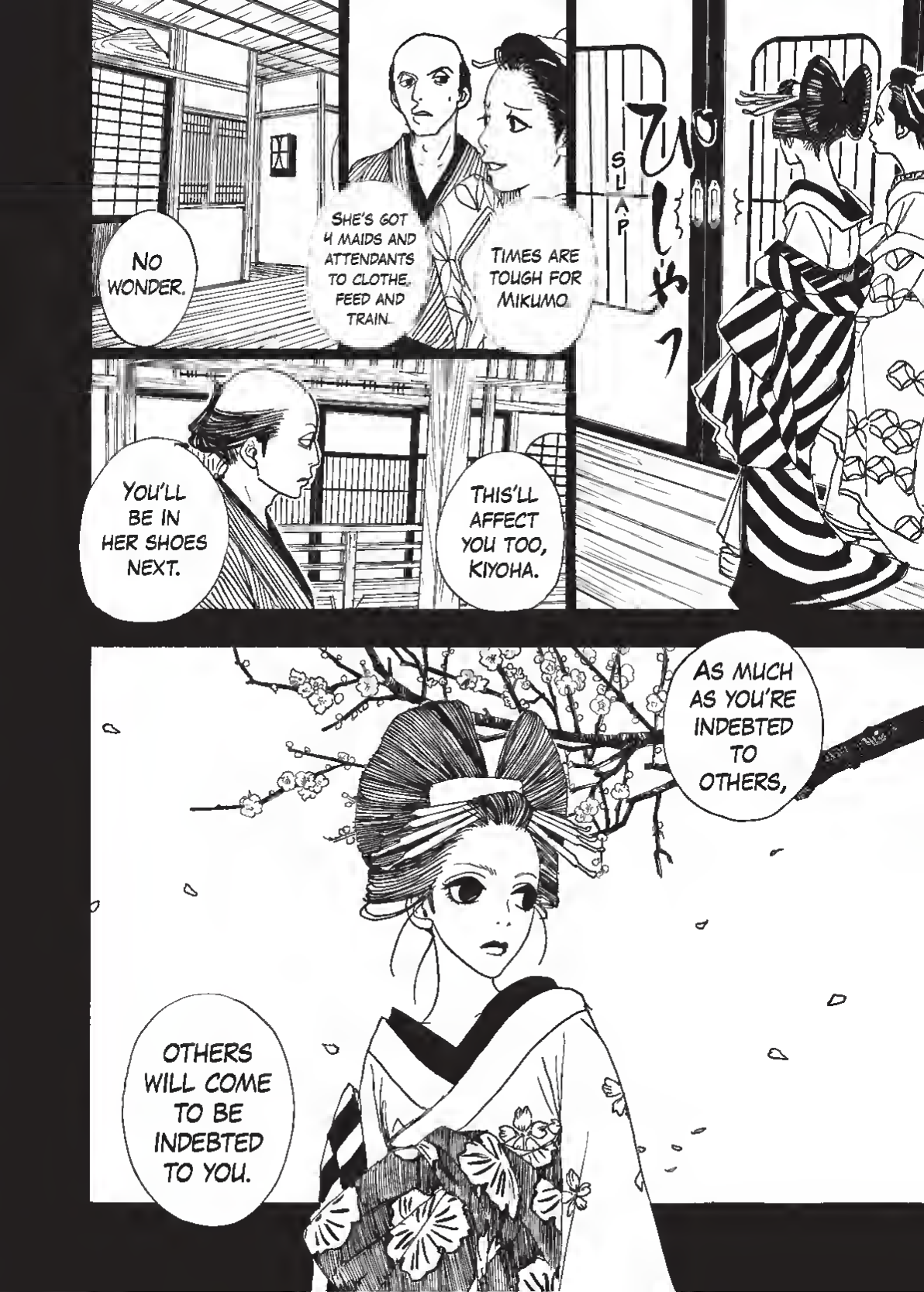
SO YOU PROMISED TO PAY THE HOUSE YOUR DAILY FEE FOR 7 DAYS JUST TO GO SEE YOUR LOVER?
THAT WAS RASH, WAKAGIKU.
I KNOW.
I KNOW IT, BUT I COULDN'T TAKE IT ANY LONGER.
MY REGULARS STOPPED SHOWING UP THE LONGER I WAS ABSENT.
AND NOW I CAN'T BEG THEM FOR CASH.
HE'S ALL I THINK ABOUT.
I JUST WANTED TO SEE HIM SO MUCH.
EVEN NOW, HE'S ALL I THINK ABOUT.

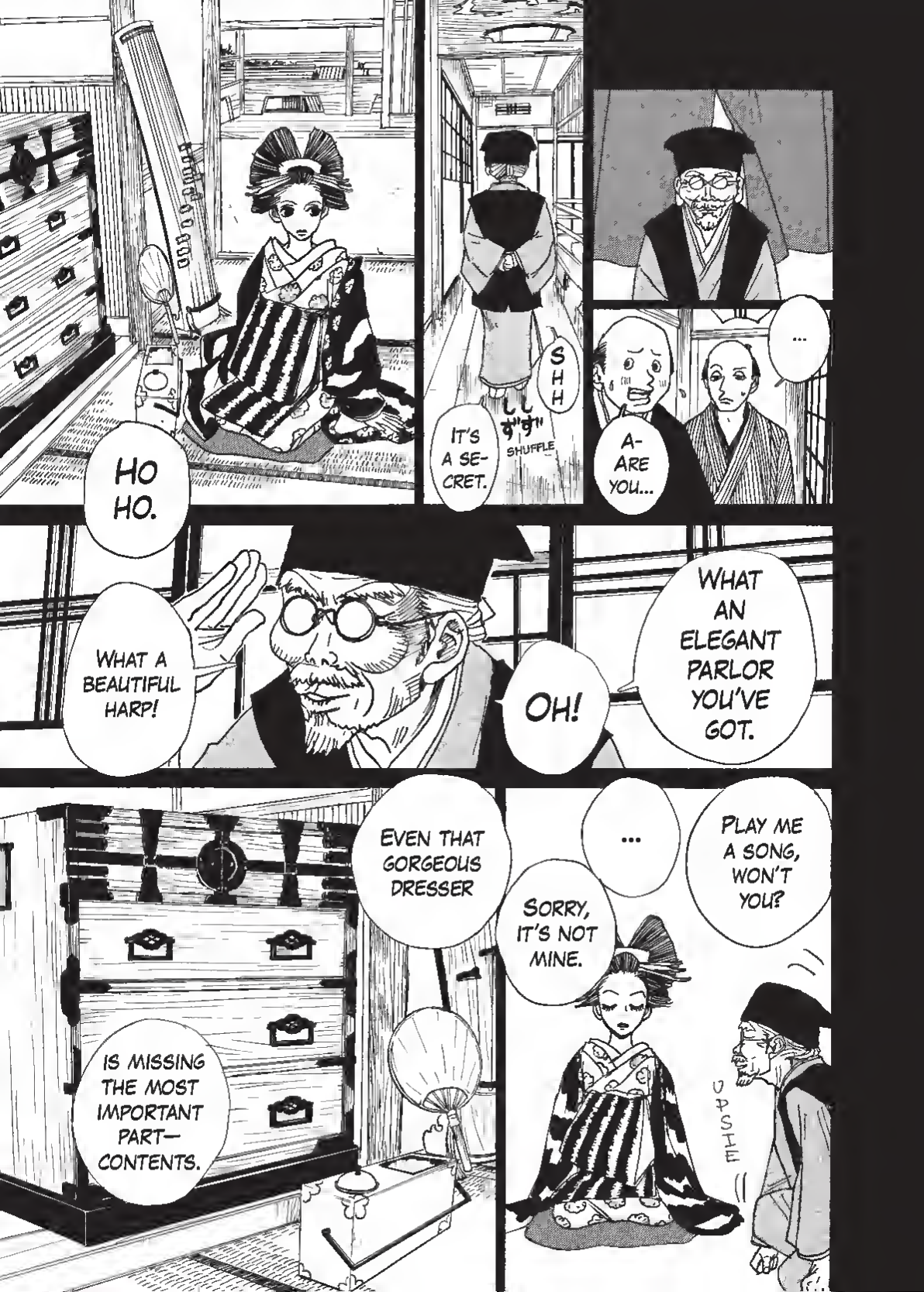
ALL RIGHT.
HUH?
IN EXCHANGE,
GIVE ME THAT HARP AS COLLATERAL.
...
TWANG
TWANG
TWANG
TWANG
WHAT IS THAT AWFUL NOISE?
I'M GOING DEAF!

HE TOLD HIM ABOUT OUR TEAHOUSE.
WHEN HE WAS GIVING MASTER NARUSAWA ADVICE ABOUT TAKING OVER HIS POST,
SHH.
SAKA-GUCHI... OH, THE COUNTRY BUMPKIN?
MASTER SAKAGUCHI'S PAGE WILL COME TODAY TO DISCUSS FINANCES.
MY HEAD IS THROB-BING!!
SOMEONE HURRY OVER AND MAKE HER KNOCK THAT OFF!
AND HE SAID HE WANTED THE TOP TWO GIRLS
TO COMPETE FOR HIS FAVORS.
NUMBER ONE
AND NUMBER TWO ARE
KIYOHA AND
MI-KUMO.

I KNOW YOU POP-ULAR GIRLS HAVE MANY EXPENSES. DON'T BE SHY.
GO ON, PICK IT UP.
WHY AREN'T YOU TAKING IT?
PICK IT UP.
UH, MIKUMO,
ABOUT THE MONEY YOU OWE ME FROM LAST MONTH...

I-I-I NEVER THOUGHT YOU MIGHT CHEAT ME OR
ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
PICK IT UP...
ちゃりん
KLANG
ちゃりん
KLANG


NO WONDER.
SHE'S GOT 4 MAIDS AND ATTENDANTS TO CLOTHE, FEED AND TRAIN.
TIMES ARE TOUGH FOR MIKUMO.
SLIP
YOU'LL BE IN HER SHOES NEXT.
THIS'LL AFFECT YOU TOO, KIYOHA.
AS MUCH AS YOU'RE INDEBTED TO OTHERS,
OTHERS WILL COME TO BE INDEBTED TO YOU.


HO HO.
IT'S A SECRET.
SHH
SHUFFLE
A-ARE YOU...
...
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL HARP!
OH!
WHAT AN ELEGANT PARLOR YOU'VE GOT.
IS MISSING THE MOST IMPORTANT PART— CONTENTS.
EVEN THAT GORGEOUS DRESSER
SORRY, IT'S NOT MINE.
...
PLAY ME A SONG, WON'T YOU?
UPSIE

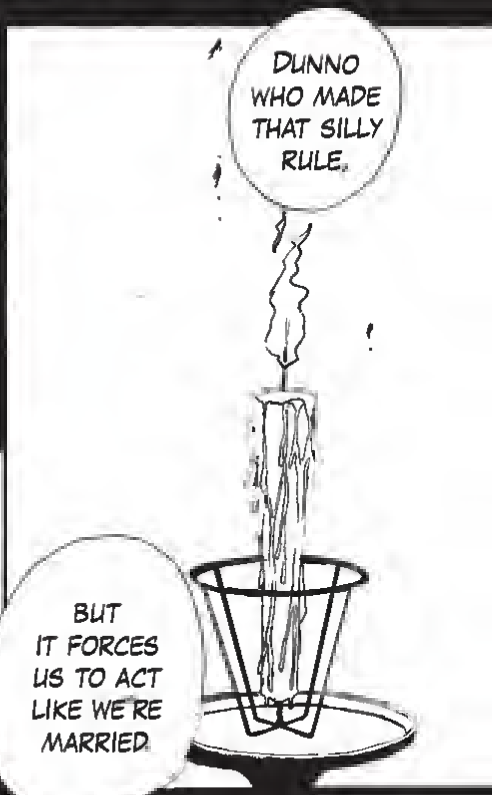
IT'S PITIABLE AND DEPRESSING.
I DON'T LIKE PRETENDING TO HAVE SOMETHING I DON'T.
TO NEVER TELL GUESTS SUCH SECRETS.
I THOUGHT YOU COURTESANS MADE IT A POINT
TO ACTUALLY HAVE SUBSTANCE AND PRETEND YOU DON'T.
IT'S MORE ELEGANT
HUH?
SHODDY?
YOUR SHODDY DISGUISE IS SLIPPING, SIR...
ぽん
THWAP
HO HO! AS CHEEKY AS ALWAYS.
YOU TALK AS IF YOU HAD SUBSTANCE YOURSELF.

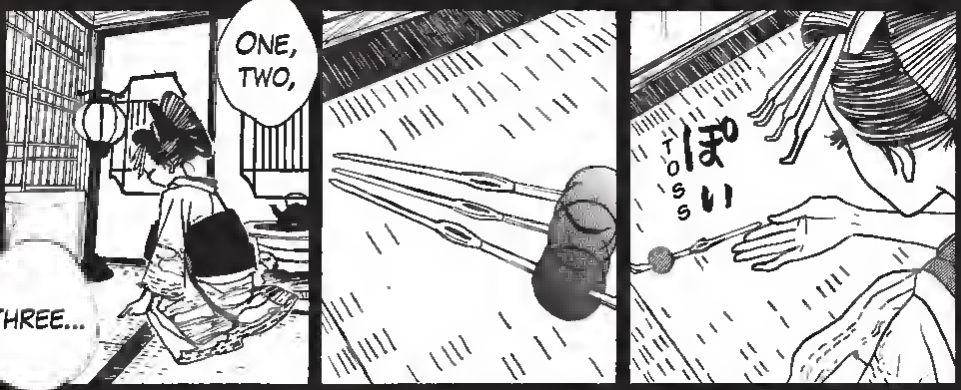
SIR, YOU'VE BEEN DISCOVERED.
DAMN
GET BACK HERE!!
HO HO! RUN AWAY, RUN AWAY!
It was forbidden for a guest to be with anyone other than his regular courtesan.
RAA!
RAA
If caught, he'd be paraded about by maids or *shinzo* as punishment.
ARGH!
WHATTA HEADACHE !!

FINE, I'LL PAY FOR ALL THE GIRLS.
HAPPY NOW?

I DIDN'T WANT TO SEE ANYONE BUT HIM.

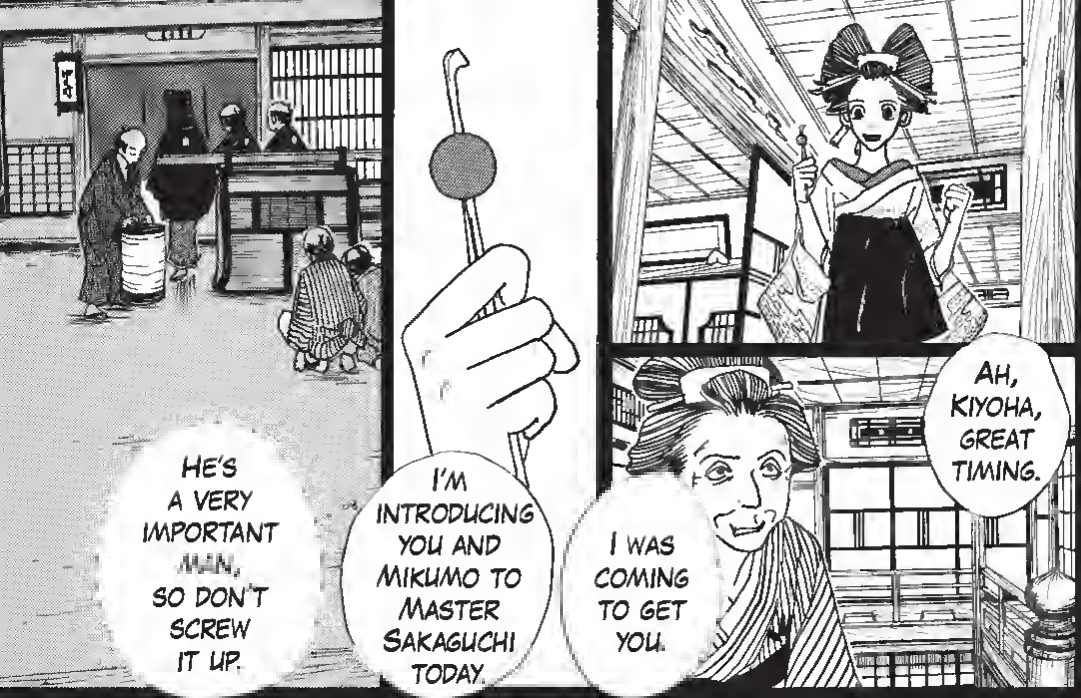
IT WAS SO BAD I WANTED TO TAKE A BREAK LIKE WAKAGIKU DID.




ONE, TWO,
THREE...
TOSS
ぽい

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!
OFF AGAIN?
HE'D NOT SHOW UP FOR AT LEAST 10 DAYS AFTER SEEING ME.
ONE MORE TIME...
15... ODDS.

...
READY?
I CAME HERE TO SEE WAKAGIKU!
EVENS!
18!!
I'D ONLY EVER GOTTEN ODD NUMBERS!
HE MIGHT BE COMING!
HUP!
ONE, TWO...

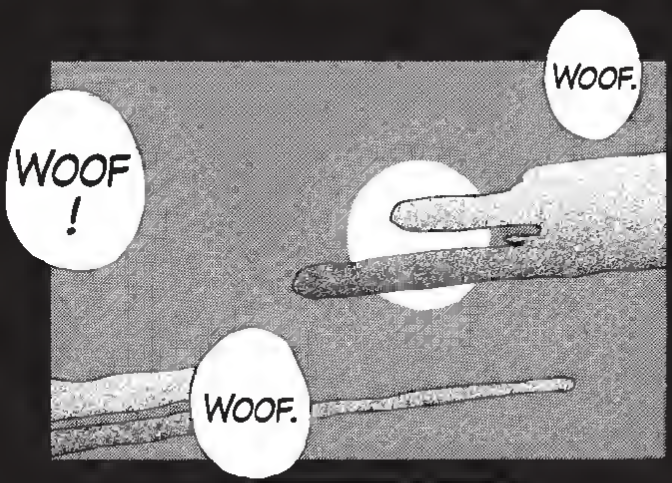

HE'S A VERY IMPORTANT MAN, SO DON'T SCREW IT UP.
I'M INTRODUCING YOU AND MIKUMO TO MASTER SAKAGUCHI TODAY.
I WAS COMING TO GET YOU.
AH, KIYOHA, GREAT TIMING.

...
I KNEW TAYUU* ARE FAMOUS FOR BEING PROUD AND TACITURN, BUT...
SHE'S SOME-THING ELSE...
BARK, BARK!
?
BARK!
KIYOHA!!
WOOF, WOOF.
WOOF!

KIYO-HA!
He'll have you killed!
AWOOOO!
HER STORY IS VERY TRAGIC.
I'M SO SORRY, MASTER SAKAGUCHI.
SHE WAS CURSED BY A DOG DEMON.
HO HO...
THAT'S GREAT!
I LOVE DOGS!

NO WAY...
HUH?
S-SO YOU CHOOSE KIYOHA?
R-REALLY ...?
BUSTLE
どや
I figured he'd reject her
BARK.
I WAS SHOCKED HALF TO DEATH TO SEE HER NOSE PAINTED BLACK.
GRRRR ....
どや
WHAT ON EARTH HAS GOTTEN INTO HER?
ALL RIGHT, HURRY, GO GET READY.
KIYOHA.

SOJIRO ...
IT WAS EVENS, SO I
TRIED ACTING LIKE A DOG TO GET THAT GUEST TO REJECT ME.
HA HA, WHAT HAPPENED
TO YOUR NOSE?
AND HE REALLY CAME...
YOU MUST BE JOKING. NO, YOU CAN'T TAKE THE NIGHT OFF.
KIYOHA !!



CHAPTER 11 END

SAKURAN 12

AH...
カ K
カ A W
K A W
ー
I HATE THE SUNRISE.
ME, TOO.
THE MOMENT WE SEPARATE
YOU'RE NO LONGER MINE.
I HATE THINKING YOU'LL BE WITH ANOTHER MAN TO-NIGHT.

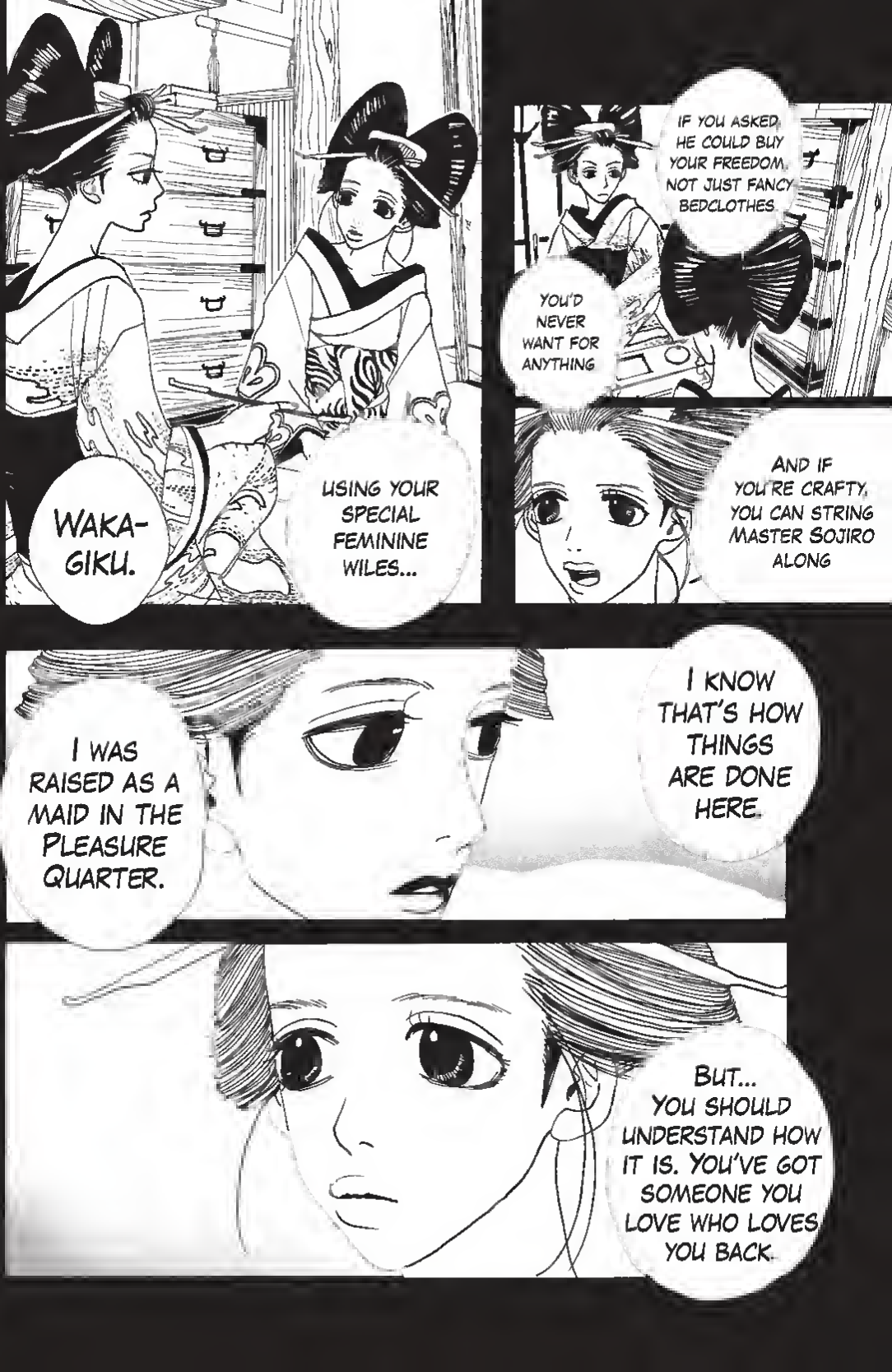
PLEASE DON'T SAY THAT.
THE MORE A MAN SAYS AND SWEARS HE LOVES HER.
THE MORE A COURTESAN FEARS SHE'LL BE DECEIVED.
YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S MUCH HARDER FOR YOU.
FORGIVE ME.
I BELIEVE YOUR HEART IS TRUE.

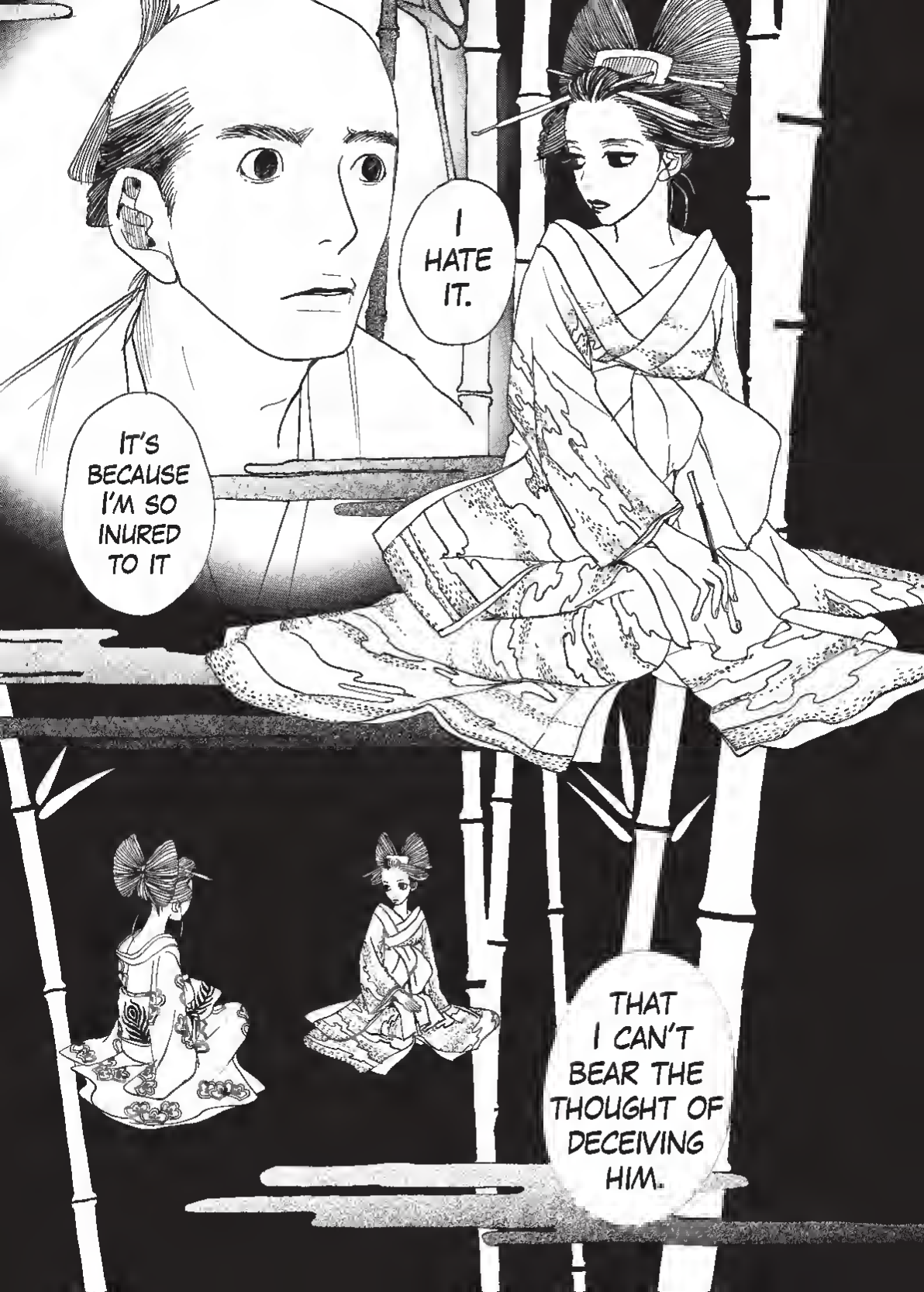
LIKE A LILY BLOOMING IN PITCH DARKNESS,
I'LL BELIEVE THAT ONE THING TO BE TRUE.
DID SHE DO SOMETHING WRONG?
WHAT ON EARTH IS WRONG WITH KIYOHA?
SHE'S NOT PUTTING ANY EFFORT INTO IT.
SHE'S ALWAYS SPACED OUT.
SHOULDN'T SHE LAY OFF HER SPECIAL
FRIEND?
TO THINK A REGULAR WOULD SAY SUCH A THING.

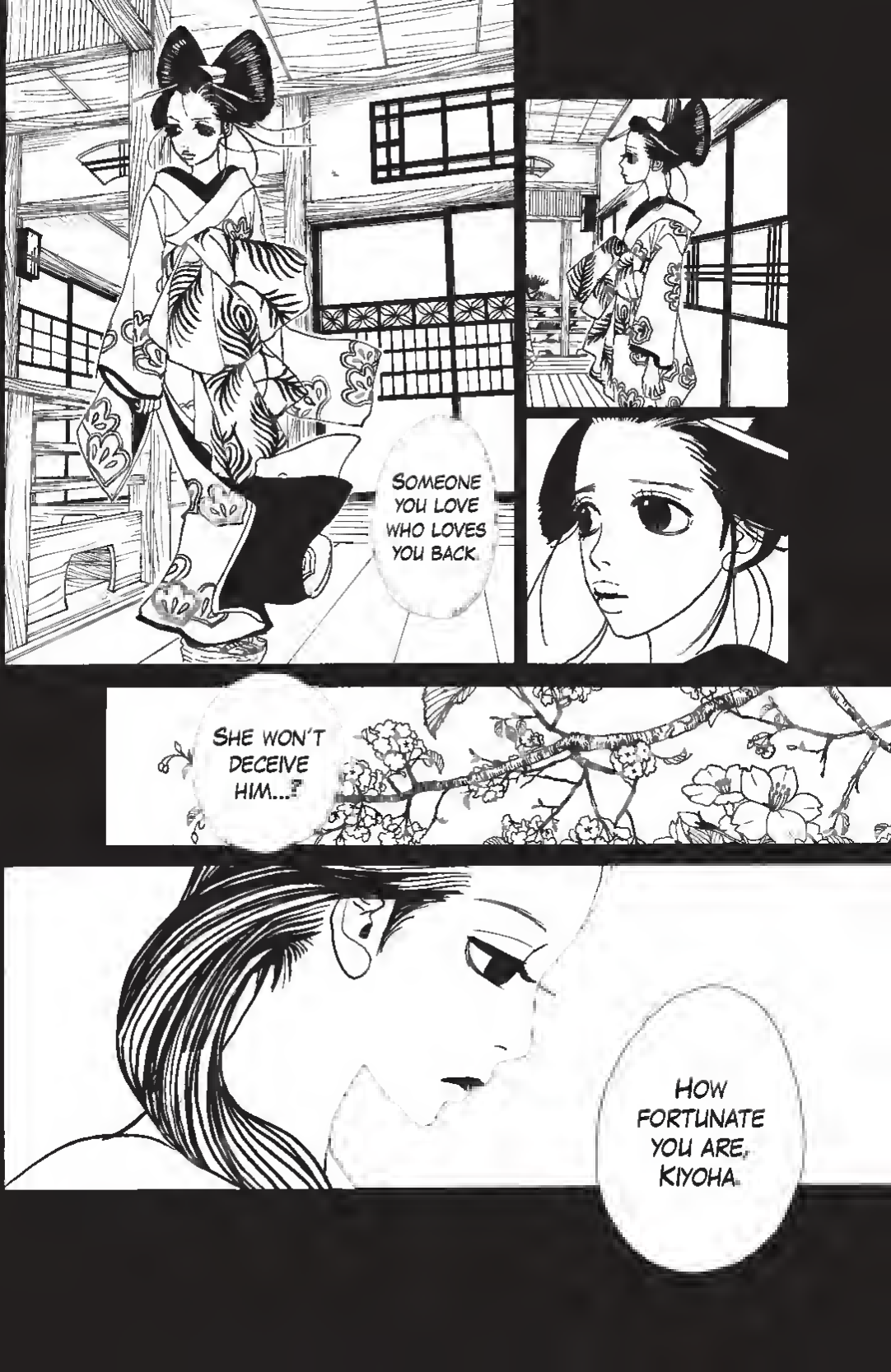
HE'S A SNOB OF A SAMURAI.
HMPH.
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU? THEY'RE COMPLAINING THAT YOU'RE GIVING TOO MUCH PREFERENCE TO YOUR LOVER
AND IGNORING MASTER SAKAGUCHI, A REGULAR.
I HAVE NO IDEA HOW I'M SUPPOSED TO ACT IN PLACES LIKE THIS.
JUST USE HIS COUNTRY ROOTS AGAINST HIM.
IT'S NOT THAT HE ABUSES HIS SAMURAI STATUS.

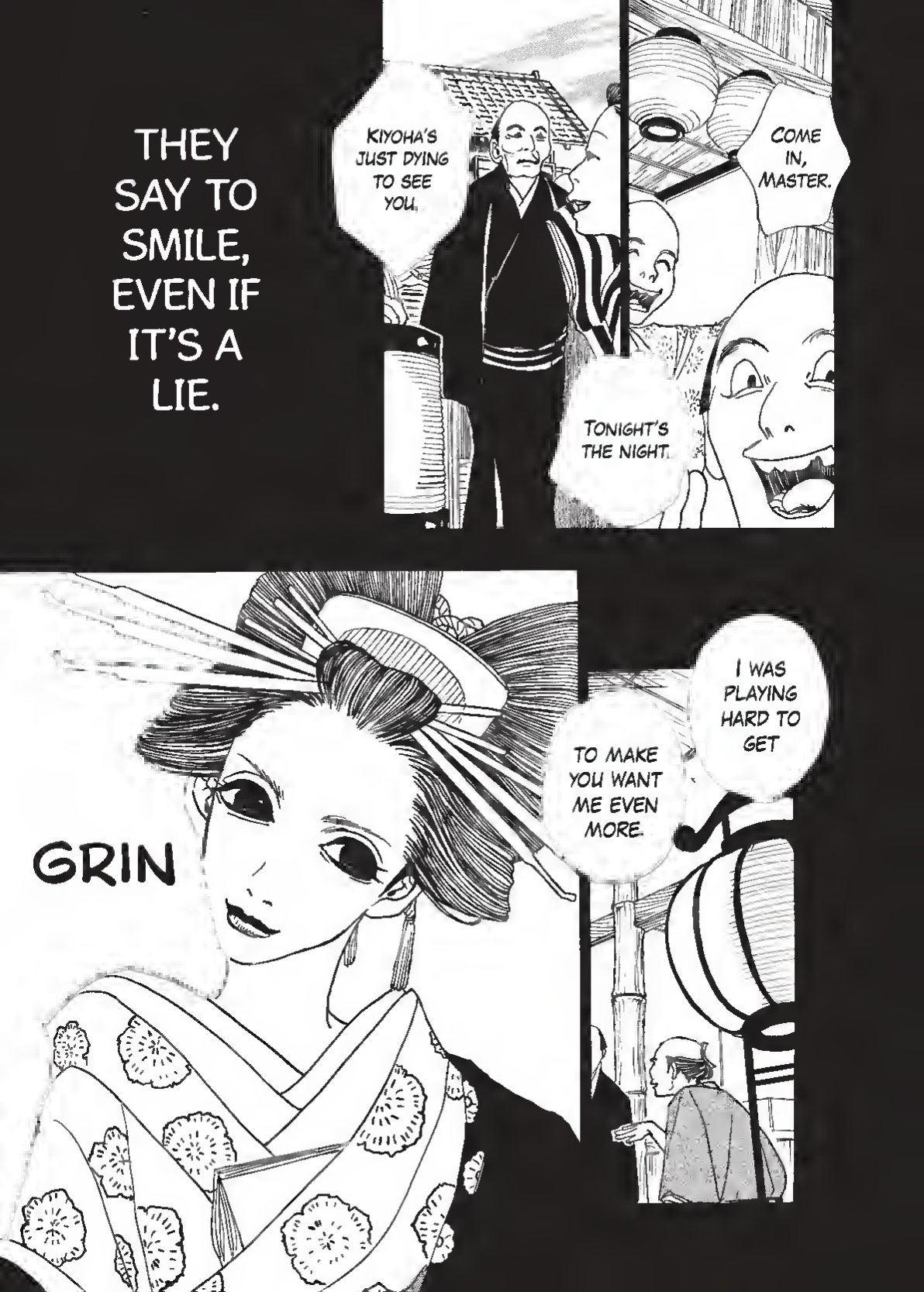
I DON'T LIKE MAKING THREATS
AS SUCH BEHAVIOR IS CONSIDERED UNCOUTH HERE.
THREATS? WHAT KIND OF THREATS?
IF KIYOHA KEEPS ME WAITING ANY LONGER
I'LL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO
THREATEN HER.
THREATEN HER?
YES.

I CAN'T KEEP PUTTING UP WITH YOUR TROUBLESOME BEHAVIOR.
IF YOU INSIST ON AVOIDING MASTER SAKAGUCHI
I'LL KEEP YOU FROM SEEING YOUR PRECIOUS MASTER SO.
THAT OLD BAG... TAKING ADVANTAGE OF PEOPLE'S WEAK-NESSES ...
LOOKS LIKE I HAVE TO ATTEND MASTER SAKA-GUCHI.
I REALLY CAN'T WORK UP ANY EXCITEMENT, THOUGH.
BUT...


WAKA-GIKU.
USING YOUR SPECIAL FEMININE WILES...
IF YOU ASKED, HE COULD BUY YOUR FREEDOM, NOT JUST FANCY BEDCLOTHES.
YOU'D NEVER WANT FOR ANYTHING
AND IF YOU'RE CRAFTY, YOU CAN STRING MASTER SOJIRO ALONG
I WAS RAISED AS A MAID IN THE PLEASURE QUARTER.
I KNOW THAT'S HOW THINGS ARE DONE HERE.
BUT... YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND HOW IT IS. YOU'VE GOT SOMEONE YOU LOVE WHO LOVES YOU BACK.


I HATE IT.
IT'S BECAUSE I'M SO INURED TO IT
THAT I CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF DECEIVING HIM.


SOMEONE YOU LOVE WHO LOVES YOU BACK.
SHE WON'T DECEIVE HIM...?
HOW FORTUNATE YOU ARE, KIYOHA.


THEY SAY TO SMILE, EVEN IF IT'S A LIE.
KIYOHA'S JUST DYING TO SEE YOU.
COME IN, MASTER.
TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT.
GRIN
I WAS PLAYING HARD TO GET
TO MAKE YOU WANT ME EVEN MORE.

KIYOHA, KIYOHA...
WELL, WELL. MASTER SAKAGUCHI'S IN FINE SPIRITS.
YOU'D BETTER GO GET READY.
SEE? YOU CAN DO IT IF YOU TRY!
KEEP IT UP.
HEY, KIYOHA...
WHAT IS IT?
YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT TO DECEIVE HIM, RIGHT?

WHERE'S KIYOHA?
WAKA-GIKU.
HEY!!
HEY.
SHH.
WHERE?
HUH? OH, DEAR.
SHH!
KIYOHA TOOK A SIDE TRIP.
...
ばん
SLAM
A "SIDE TRIP" IS A CODE WORD FOR A WHORE GOING TO SEE HER LOVER.
EVEN I KNOW THAT MUCH!
きゃー
EEEK!
きゃー
AAAH!

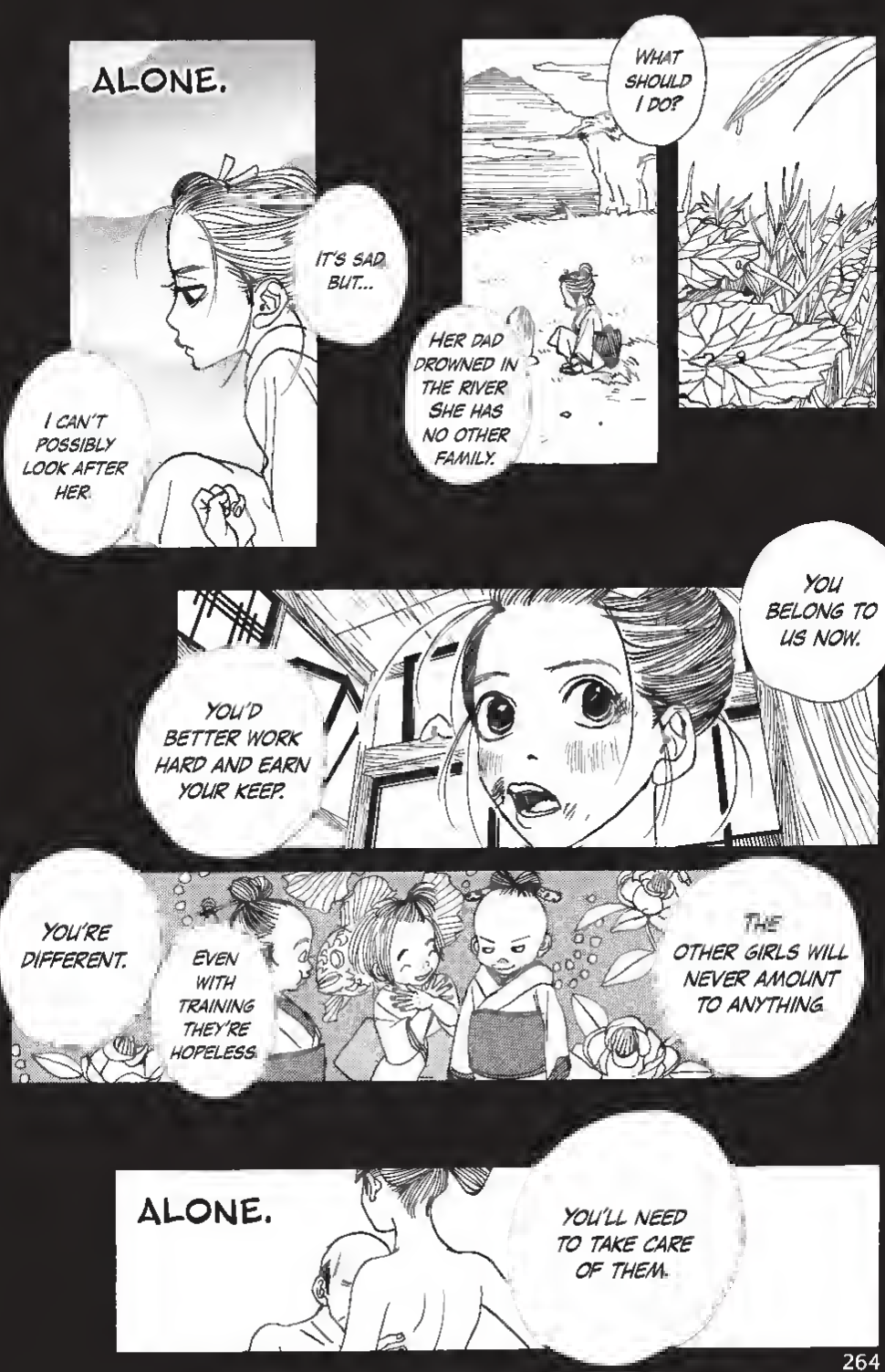
THERE !!
WHERE ?!
ばーん
SLAM
ATTACK!

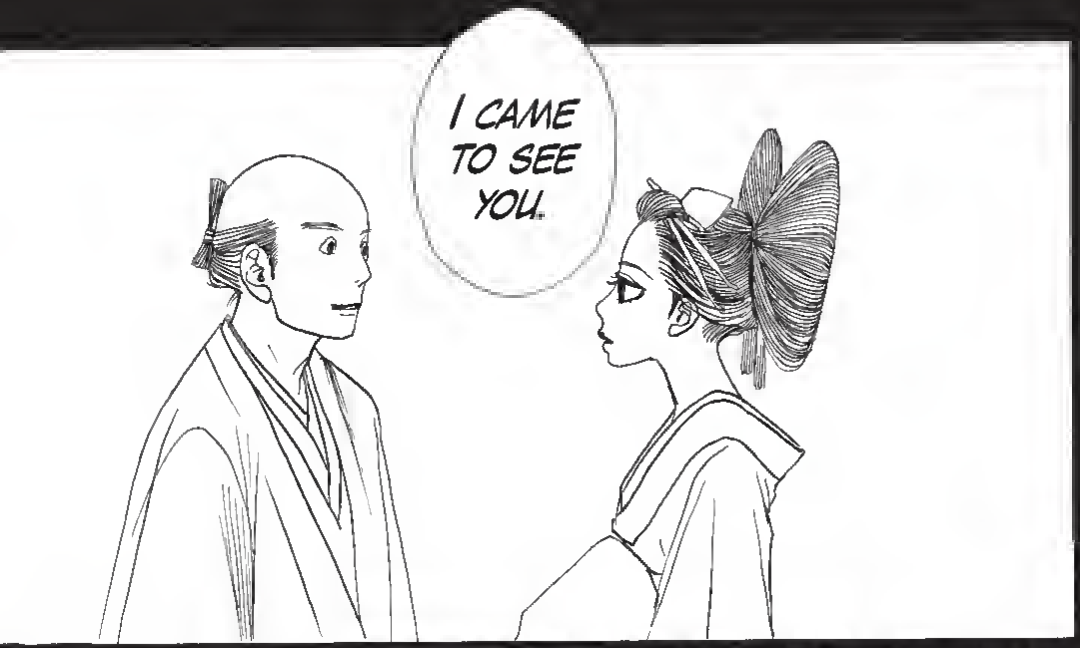
URR...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?!
"WHAT" ?
WHAT A CRASS QUESTION.

HELP! SOMEBODY!
ばた
RUSH
MASTER SAKAGUCHI, PLEASE...
ばた
RUSH
ATTEND-ANT! ATTEND-ANT!!
RUSH
ばた

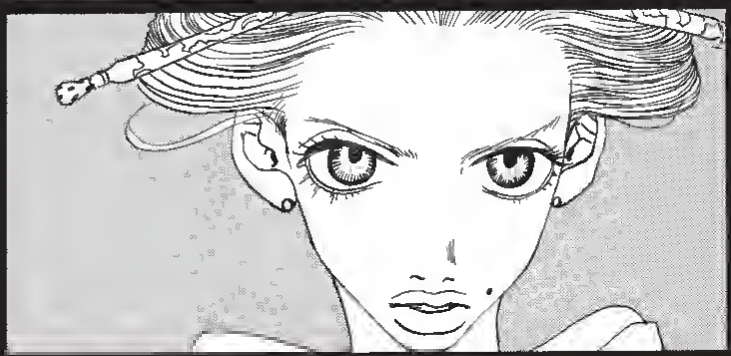
YOU COCKY BITCH.
HM?
NO MATTER HOW HIGH YOU RANK OR HOW POPULAR YOU ARE,
YOU'RE STILL JUST A HARLOT.

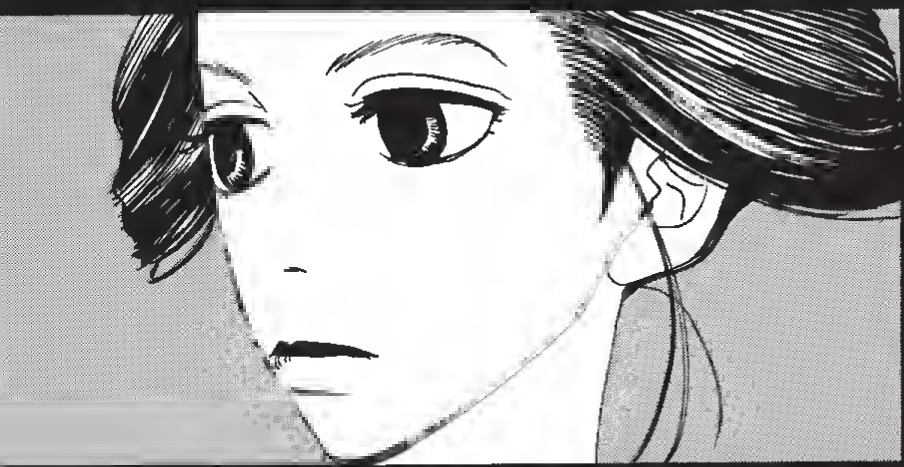
DON'T FORGET IT.


ALONE.
IT'S SAD BUT...
I CAN'T POSSIBLY LOOK AFTER HER.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
HER DAD DROWNED IN THE RIVER SHE HAS NO OTHER FAMILY.
YOU BELONG TO US NOW.
YOU'D BETTER WORK HARD AND EARN YOUR KEEP.
YOU'RE DIFFERENT.
EVEN WITH TRAINING THEY'RE HOPELESS.
THE OTHER GIRLS WILL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.
ALONE.
YOU'LL NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THEM.



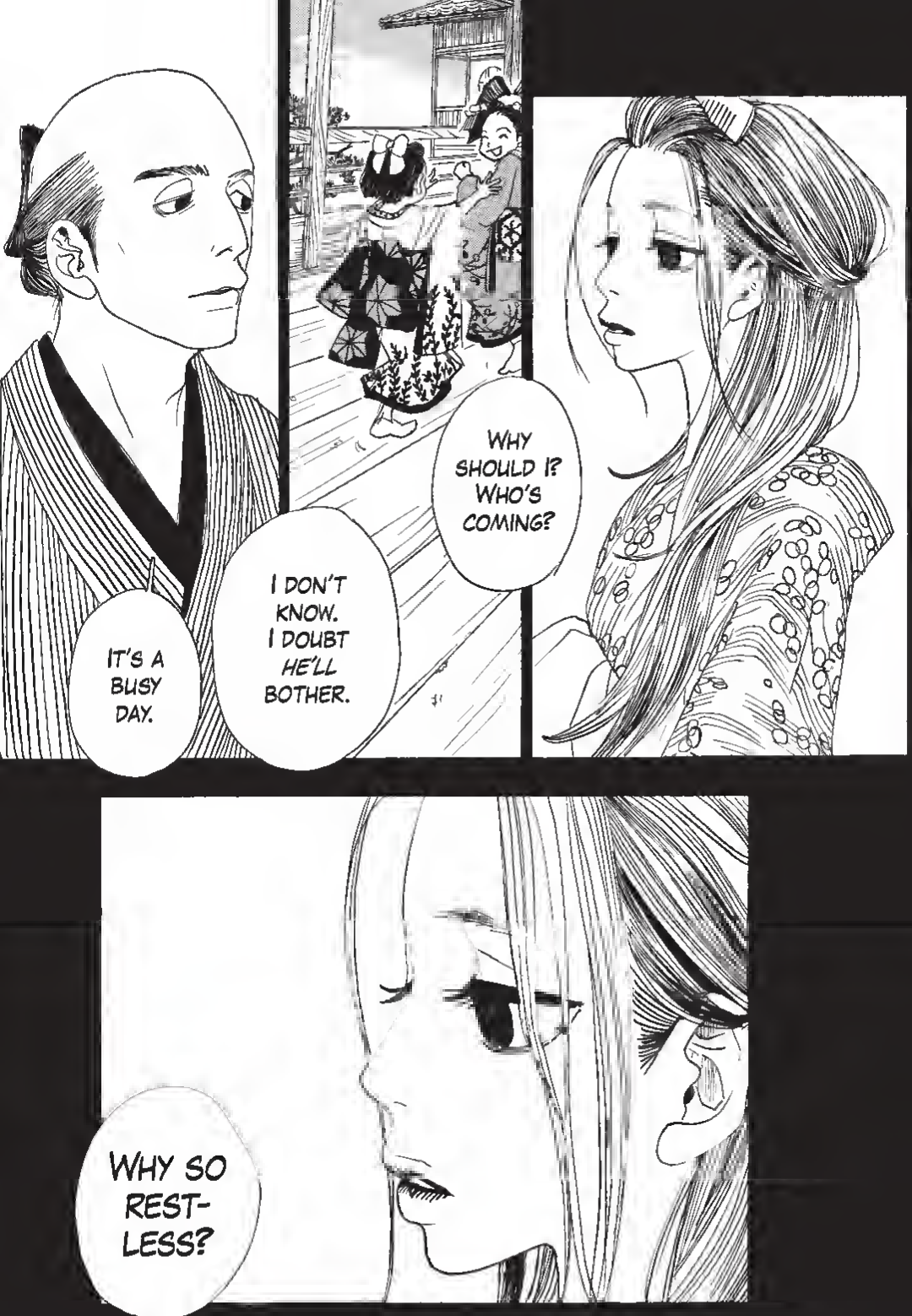
THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL "FEMININE WILES."



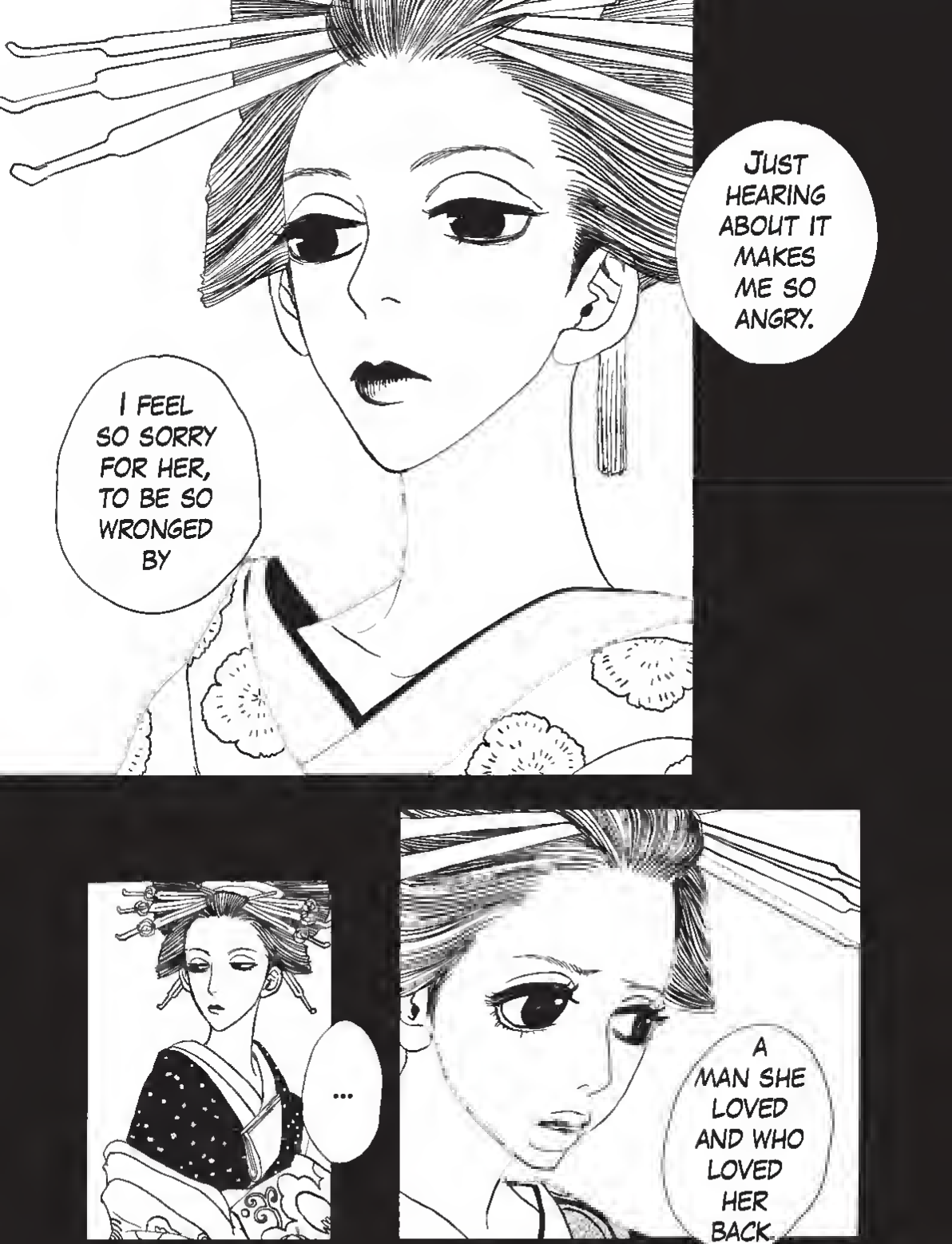


HE WAS THE FIRST PERSON I BARED MY SOUL TO.

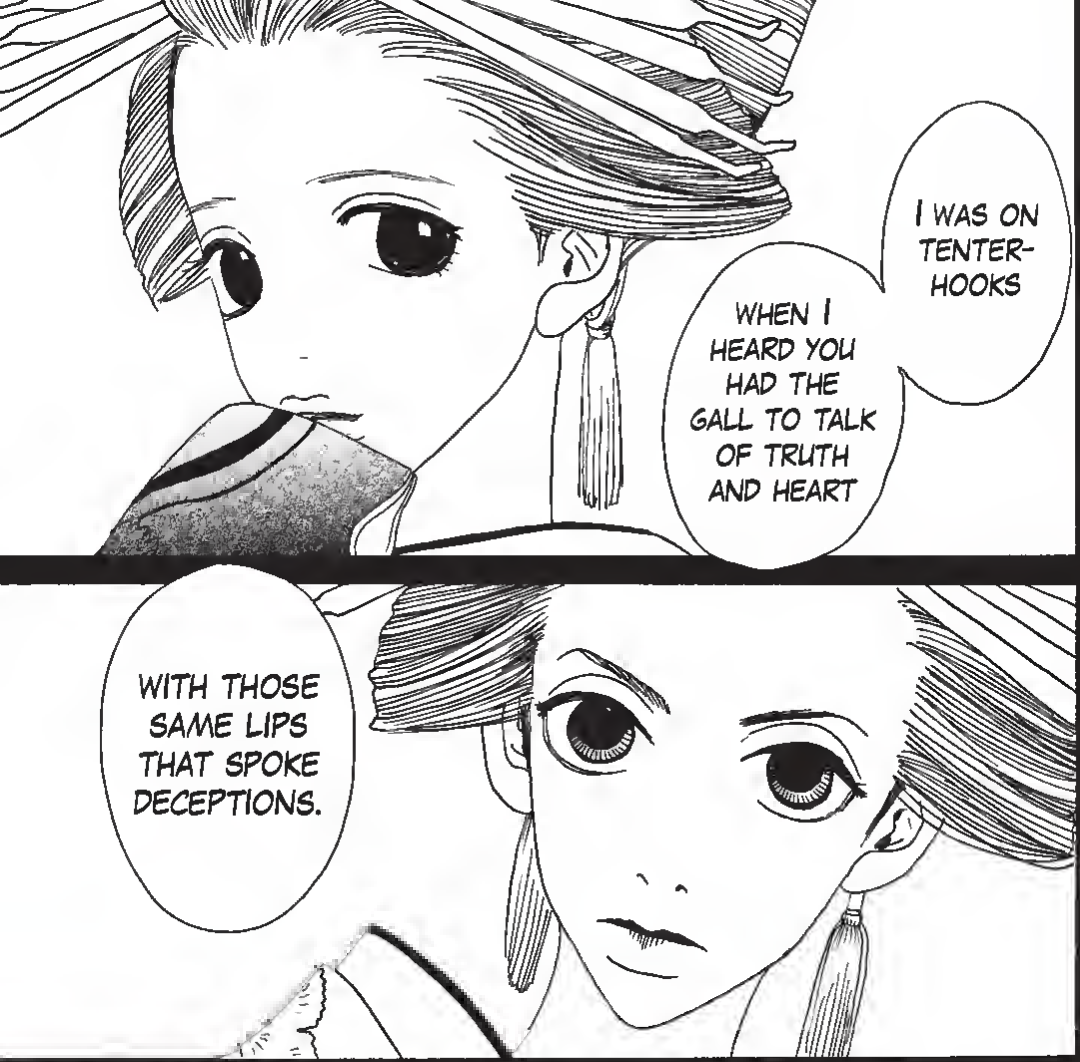
THAT NIGHT,
THE FIRST TIME I CRIED OUT, THE FIRST TIME I WEPT,
LIKE A CANDLE MELTING SLOWLY.
DAY SHIFT IS ABOUT TO START. SHOULDN'T YOU GET READY?
...


IT'S A BUSY DAY.
I DON'T KNOW. I DOUBT HE'LL BOTHER.
WHY SHOULD I? WHO'S COMING?
WHY SO REST-LESS?

SHE DUMPED THE BIG SHOT AND WAS DUMPED BY HER LOVER.
THAT'S THE LIFE OF A POPULAR GIRL.
BUT HER LOVER WAS SUCH A BAD MAN.
HE ACTED ALL INNOCENT BUT WAS REALLY GALLIVANTING AROUND TOWN.


I FEEL SO SORRY FOR HER, TO BE SO WRONGED BY
JUST HEARING ABOUT IT MAKES ME SO ANGRY.
...
A MAN SHE LOVED AND WHO LOVED HER BACK.

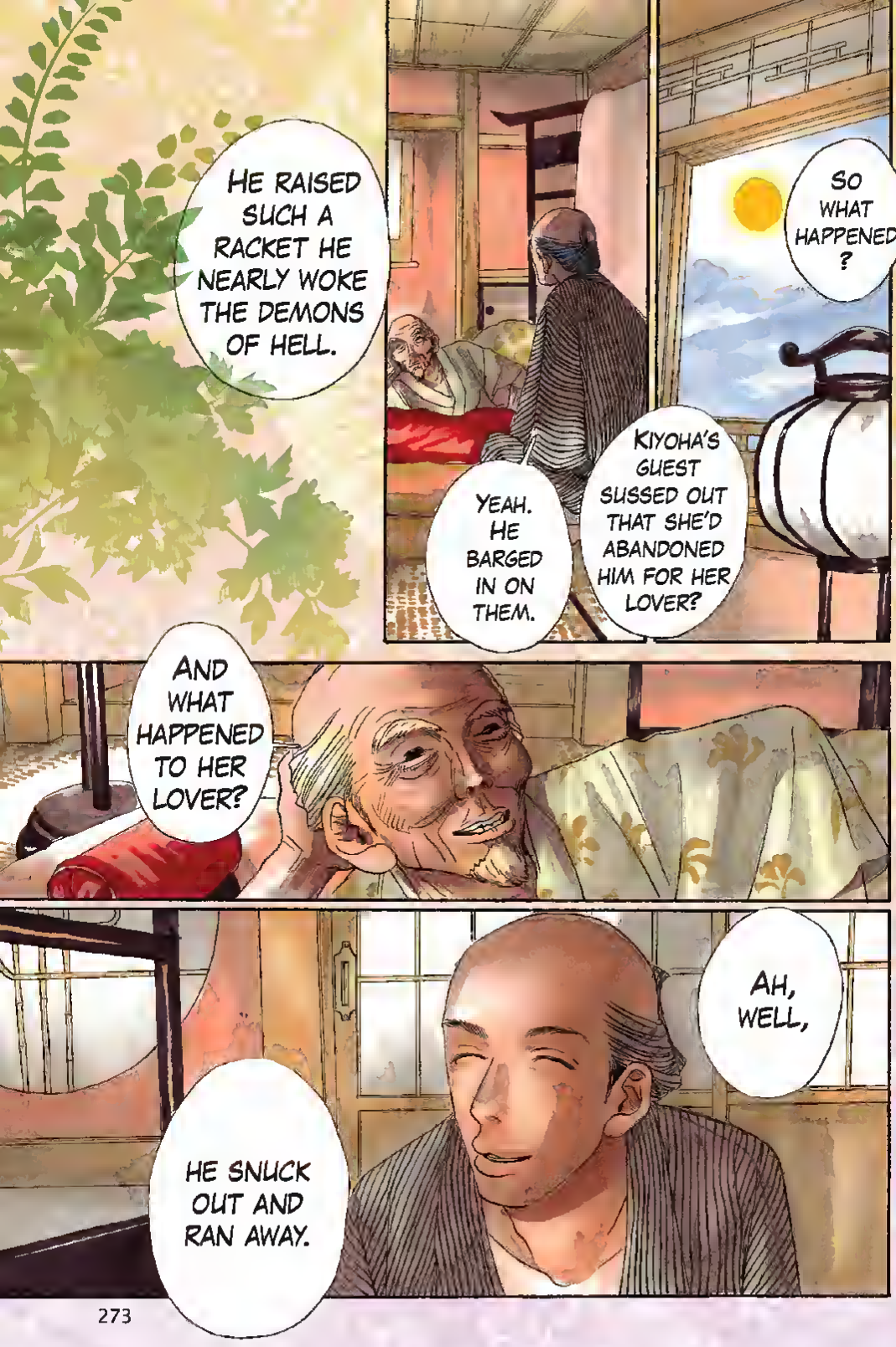
...
KIYO-HA.
DON'T YOU DARE SAY YOU FEEL SORRY WHEN YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SET IT UP.



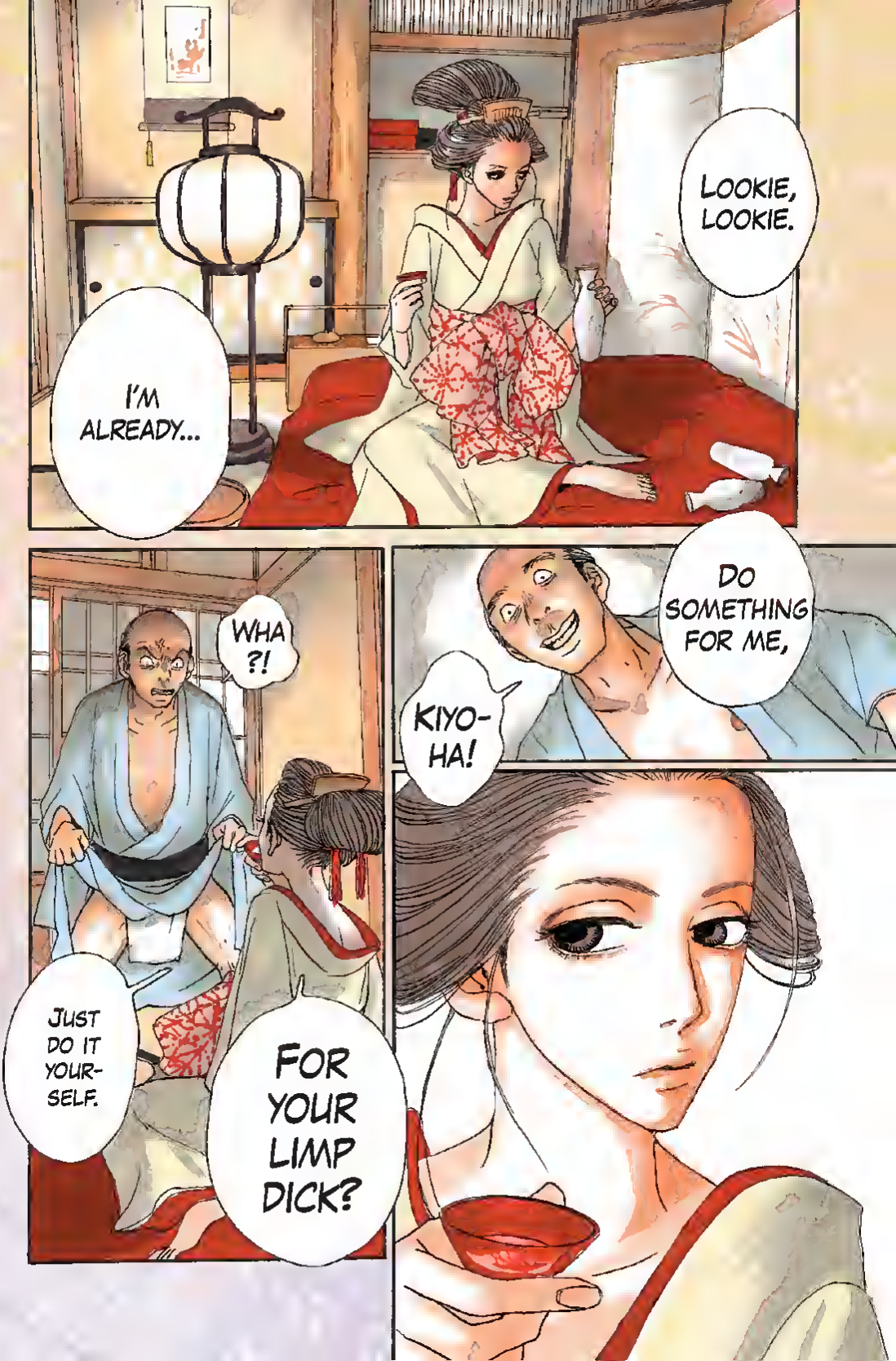
IT WAS PRECISELY BECAUSE WE'D BEEN THROUGH THE SAME ORDEAL

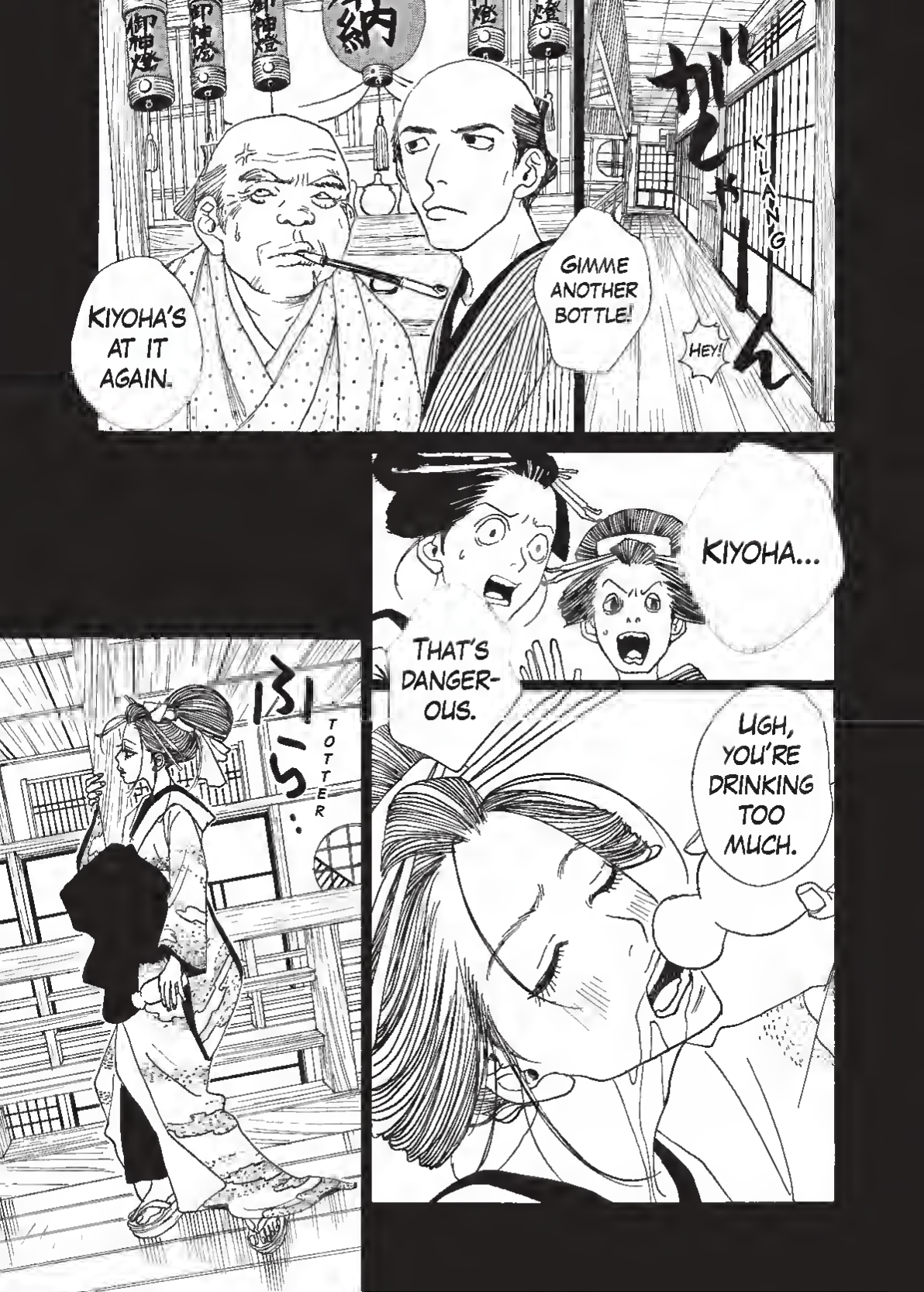
THAT SHE WOULDN'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL I'D BEEN THROUGH THE SAME HELL AS HER.

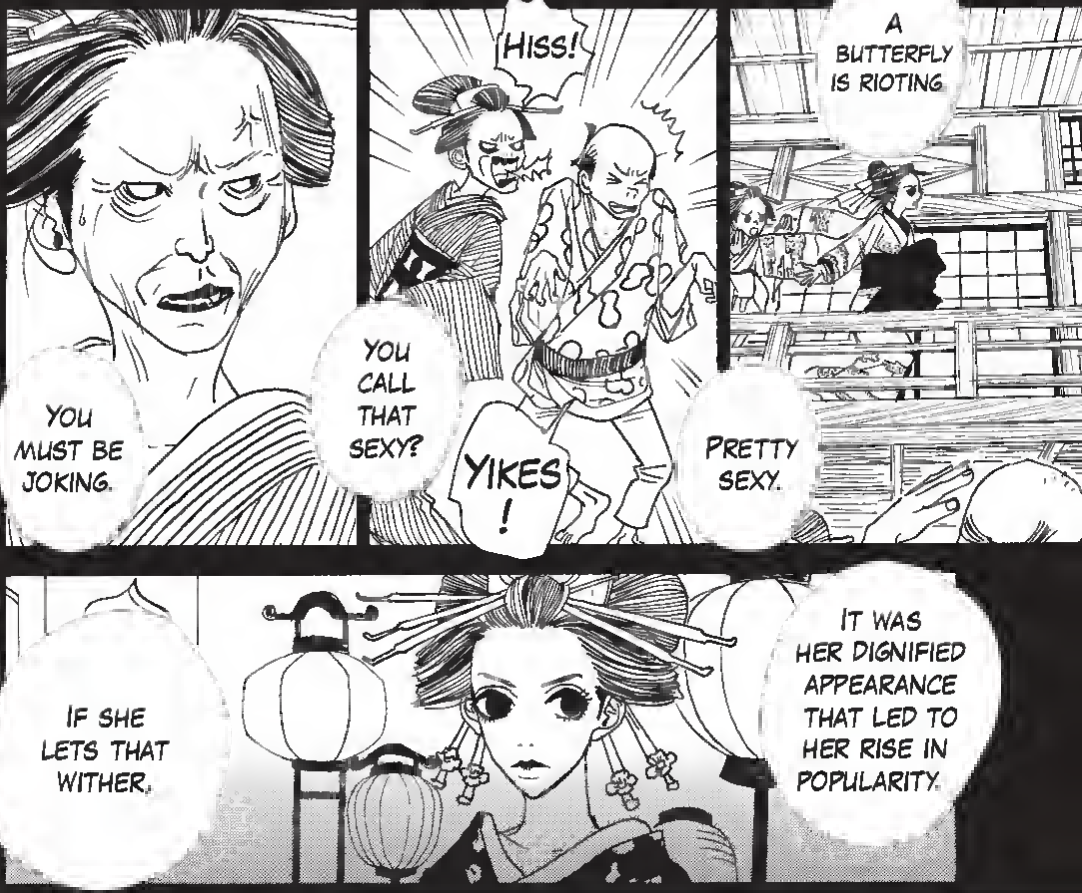
CHAPTER 12 END

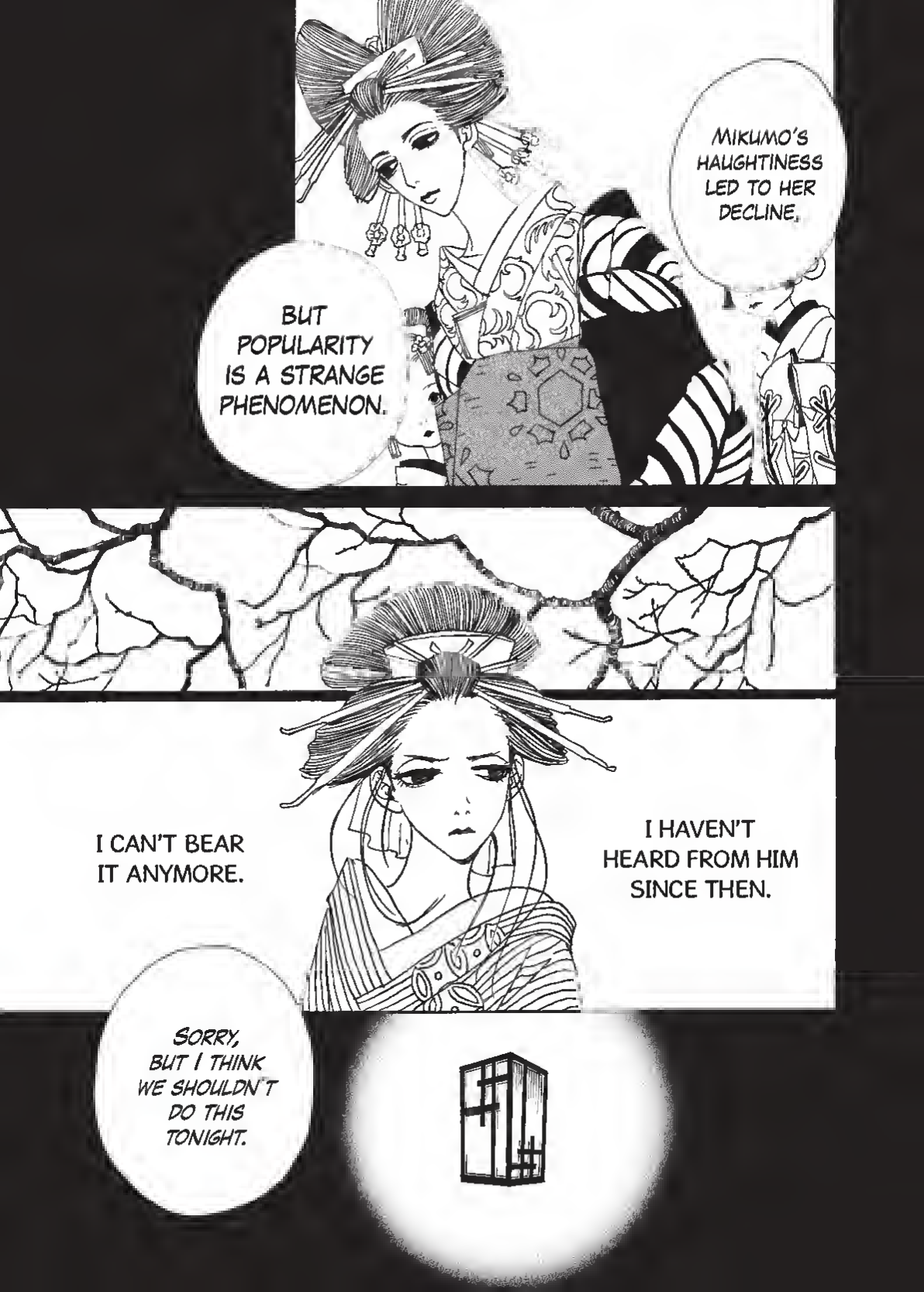

He raised such a racket he nearly woke the demons of hell.
So what happened?
Kiyoha's guest sussed out that she'd abandoned him for her lover?
Yeah. He barged in on them.
And what happened to her lover?
Ah, well,
he snuck out and ran away.

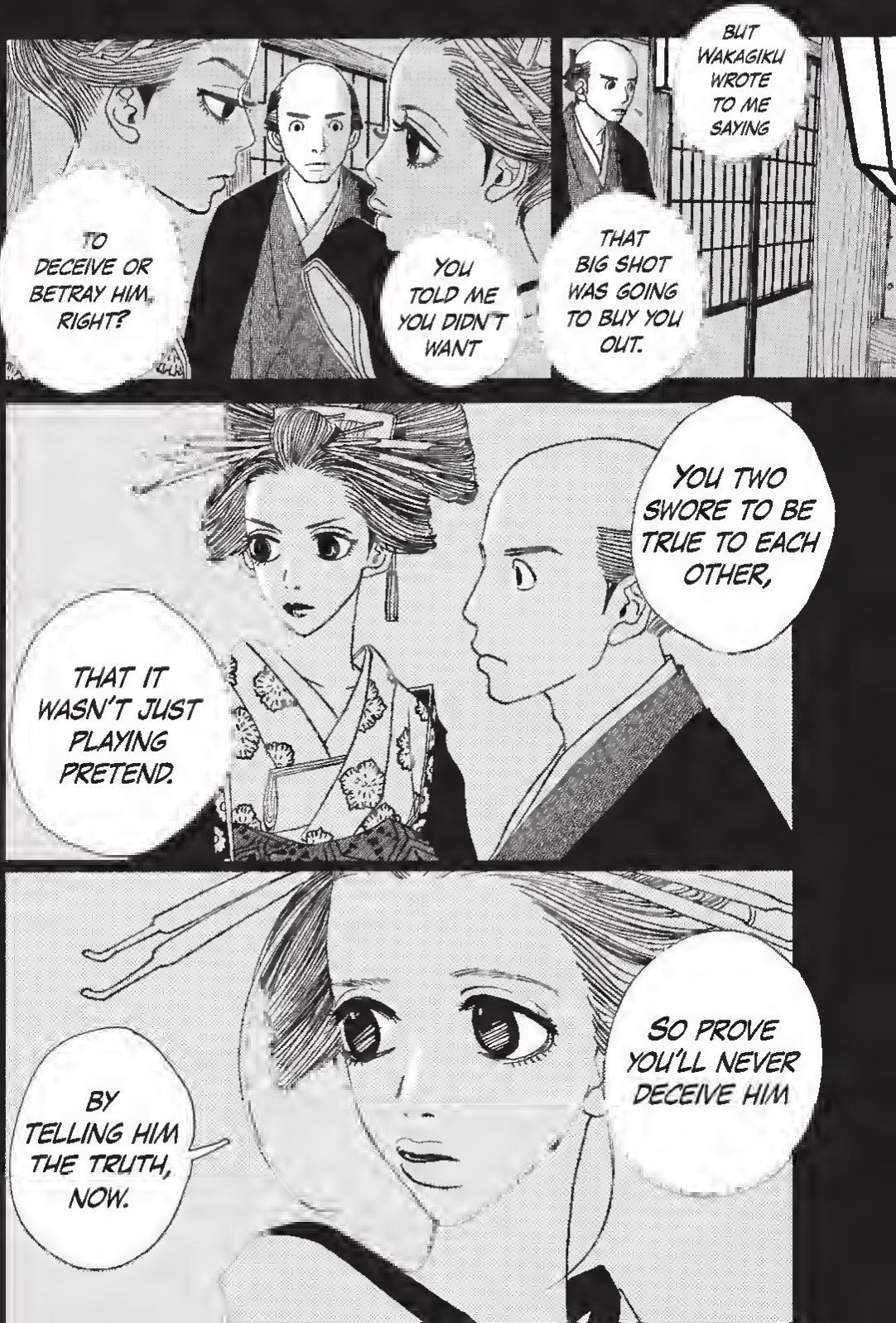
さくら
SAKURAN 13


LOOKIE, LOOKIE.
I'M ALREADY...
DO SOMETHING FOR ME,
KIYO-HA!
WHA ?!
JUST DO IT YOUR-SELF.
FOR YOUR LIMP DICK?

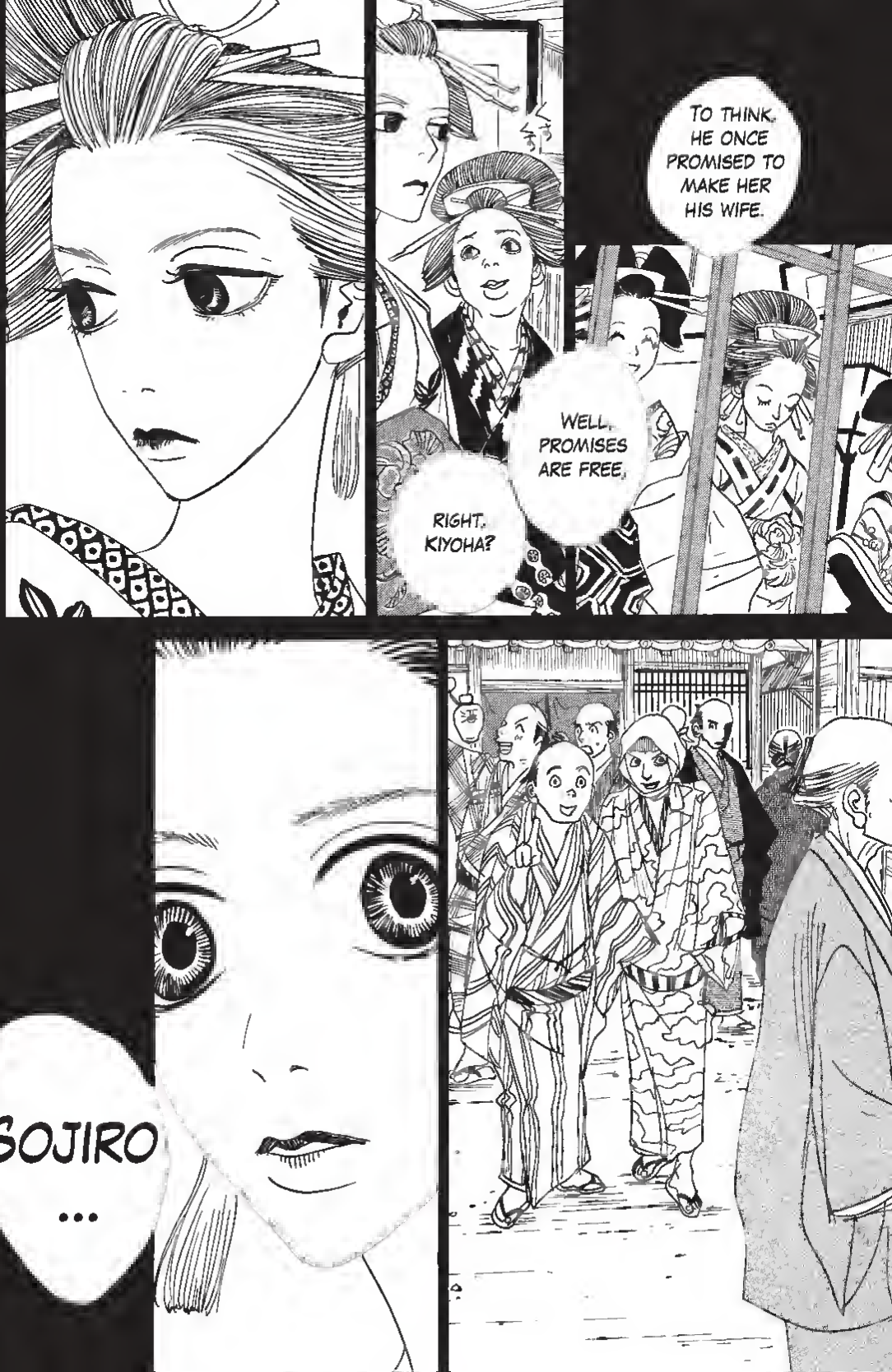

KIYOHA'S AT IT AGAIN.
GIMME ANOTHER BOTTLE!
HEY!
KLANNG
KIYOHA...
THAT'S DANGER-OUS.
UGH, YOU'RE DRINKING TOO MUCH.
TOTTER


YOU MUST BE JOKING.
YOU CALL THAT SEXY?
HISS!
YIKES!
PRETTY SEXY.
A BUTTERFLY IS RIOTING.
IF SHE LETS THAT WITHER,
IT WAS HER DIGNIFIED APPEARANCE THAT LED TO HER RISE IN POPULARITY.
YOU'LL SEE MIKUMO'S STAR RISE AGAIN.
WATCH.


MIKUMO'S HAUGHTINESS LED TO HER DECLINE.
BUT POPULARITY IS A STRANGE PHENOMENON.
I CAN'T BEAR IT ANYMORE.
I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HIM SINCE THEN.
SORRY, BUT I THINK WE SHOULDN'T DO THIS TONIGHT.


BUT WAKAGIKU WROTE TO ME SAYING
THAT BIG SHOT WAS GOING TO BUY YOU OUT.
YOU TOLD ME YOU DIDN'T WANT
TO DECEIVE OR BETRAY HIM, RIGHT?
YOU TWO SWORE TO BE TRUE TO EACH OTHER,
THAT IT WASN'T JUST PLAYING PRETEND.
SO PROVE YOU'LL NEVER DECEIVE HIM
BY TELLING HIM THE TRUTH, NOW.

AT LIGHTNING SPEED.
THEN HE RAN AWAY, JUST LIKE THAT,
AH, GOOD TO SEE YOU!
WAKA-GIKU!
HE SQUEEZED HER FOR TONS OF MONEY. THEN VANISHED.
OH, DIDN'T YOU HEAR?
WAKAGIKU'S LOVER HASN'T BEEN AROUND RECENTLY.


TO THINK. HE ONCE PROMISED TO MAKE HER HIS WIFE.
WELL, PROMISES ARE FREE, RIGHT, KIYOHA?
SOJIRO ...

MASTER SO!!
SO ...
HEY, KIYOHA.
NO, IT'S NOT HIM.

BATHS.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, KIYOHA?
HE DOESN'T LOOK ANY-THING LIKE HIM.
YOU'RE GONNA DRESS AS A MAN AND ESCAPE?
WITH A PAIR OF TROUSERS?
YOU'D BETTER BE PREPARED FOR WHAT HAPPENS.

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY LONGER.

KIYO-HA!!

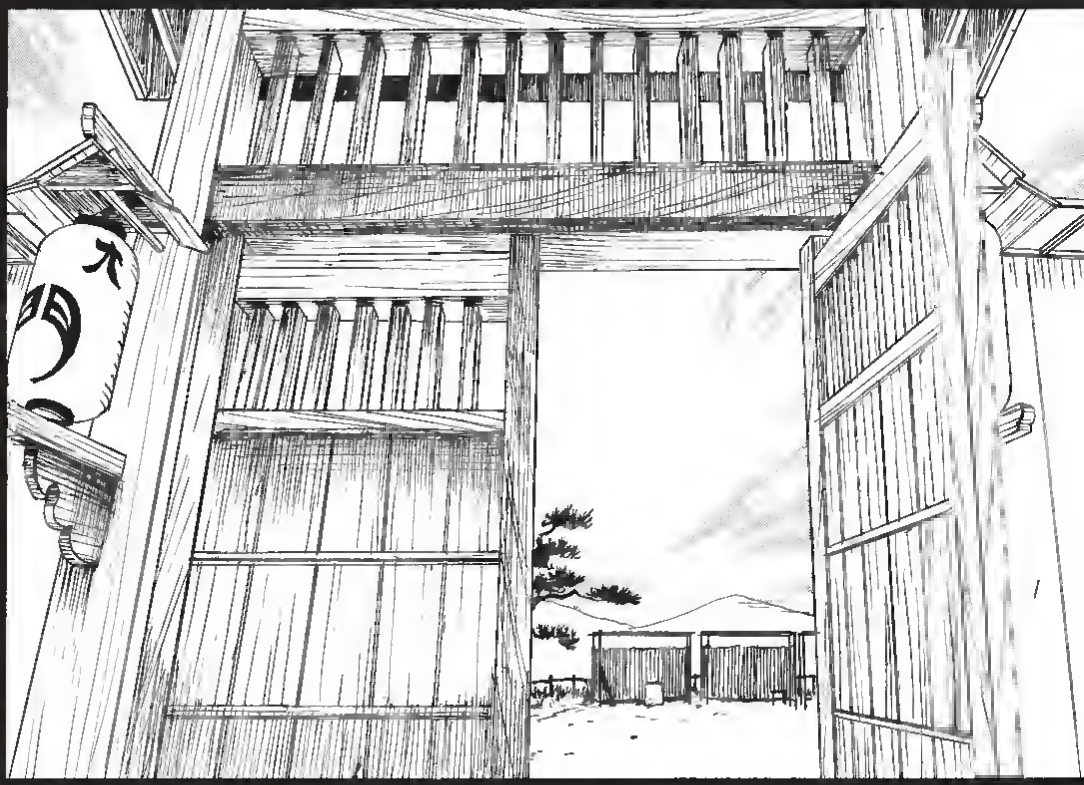
AND YET I WAS TOTALLY FLUSTERED WHEN I SAW SOMEONE THAT LOOKED LIKE HIM.

WE DECEIVED EACH OTHER. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN TOTALLY FED UP WITH HIM.

I HAD TO GO AND SETTLE THIS MYSELF.

YOU'RE COMING WITH US, SEIJI.
GOT IT!
WAS HEADED TOWARD THE BATH-HOUSE.
SMEAR
SMEAR
THEY SAY...
ESCAPED GIRLS ARE DISCOVERED BY THEIR WHITE FEET...
YOSHIZO'S CLOTHES ARE A LITTLE TOO BIG FOR ME...
TIE
キュ

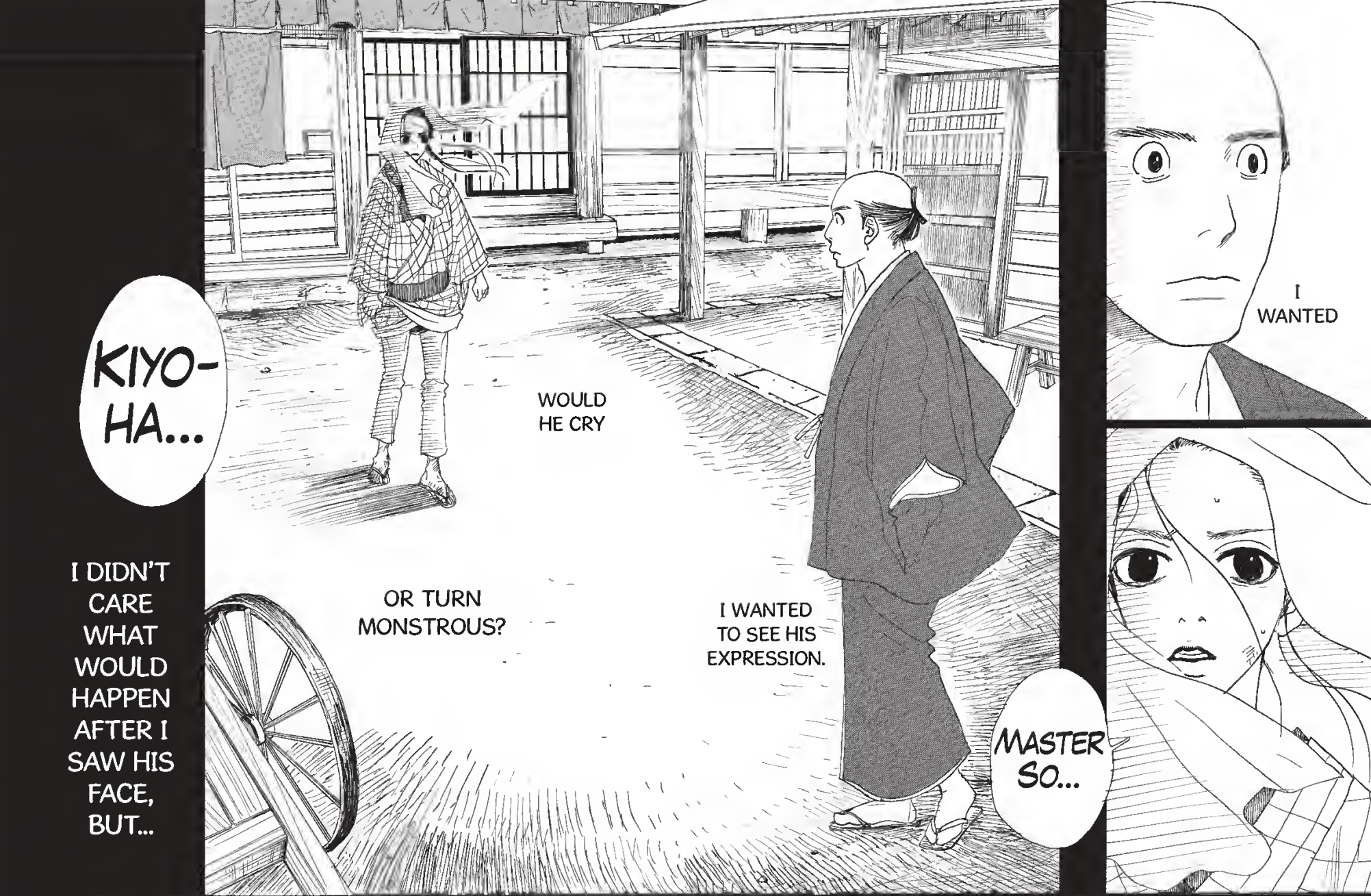
AH, THE MAIN GATE.



どきん
BADUM
どきん
BADUM
I'VE AL-WAYS WANT-ED
どきん
BADUM
どきん
BADUM
TO WALK THROUGH IT...
HEY! YOU STOLE MY STEAMED BUN!
CUT IT OUT! IT WASN'T ME!
HM? I DIDN'T NOTICE ANYTHING FUNNY.
HEY, WHO WAS THAT JUST NOW? SEEMED ODD.
はあっ
PANT
はあっ
PANT
A GIRL ESCAPED FROM THE TAMAGIKU HOUSE!
わ
WHOA
わ
WHOA
SEE? TOLD YOU!

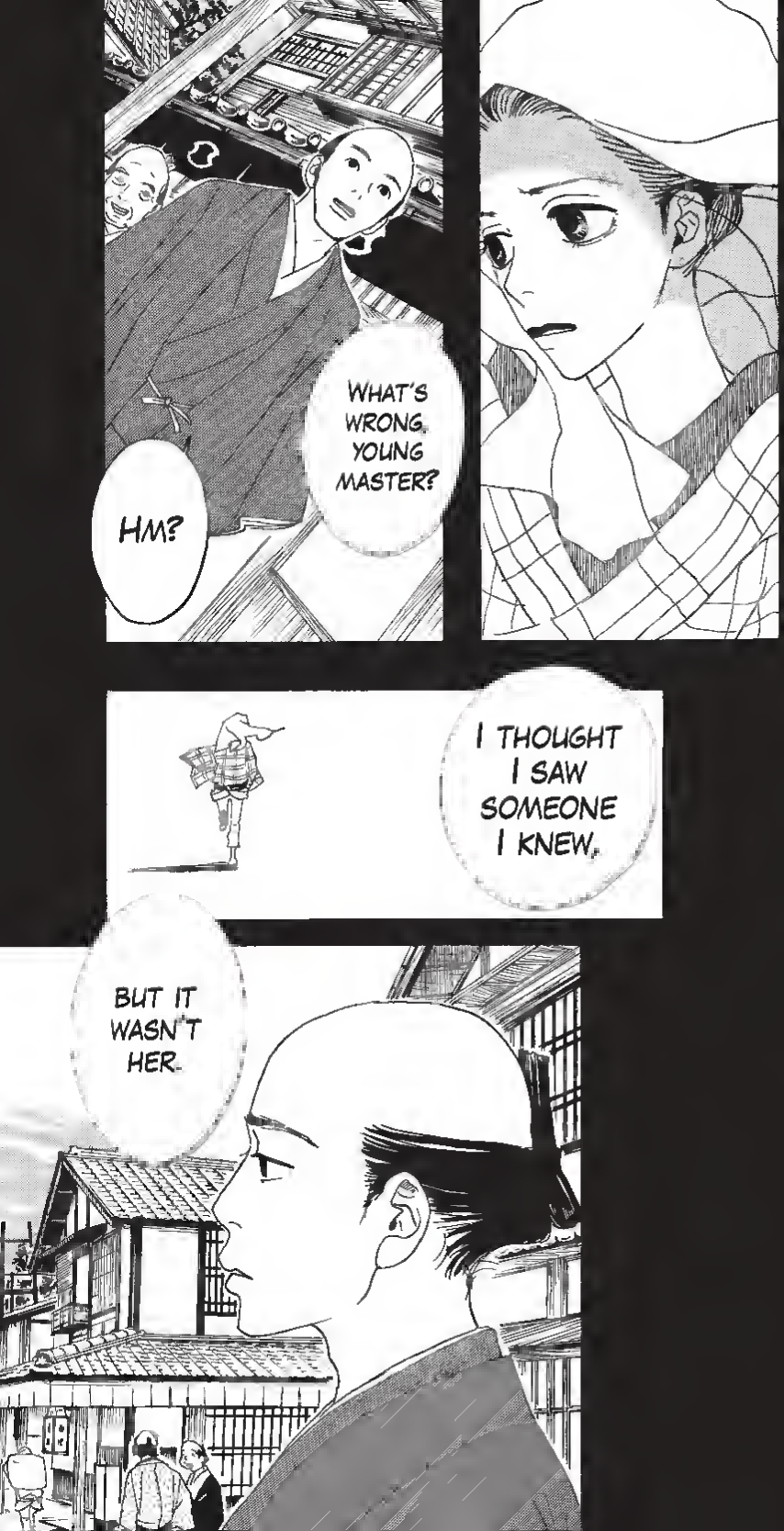
はあっ
PANT
はあっ
PANT
HUFF... OW...
MIMATSUYA? NO IDEA.
I KNOW MOST OF THE CHEMISTS AROUND HERE.

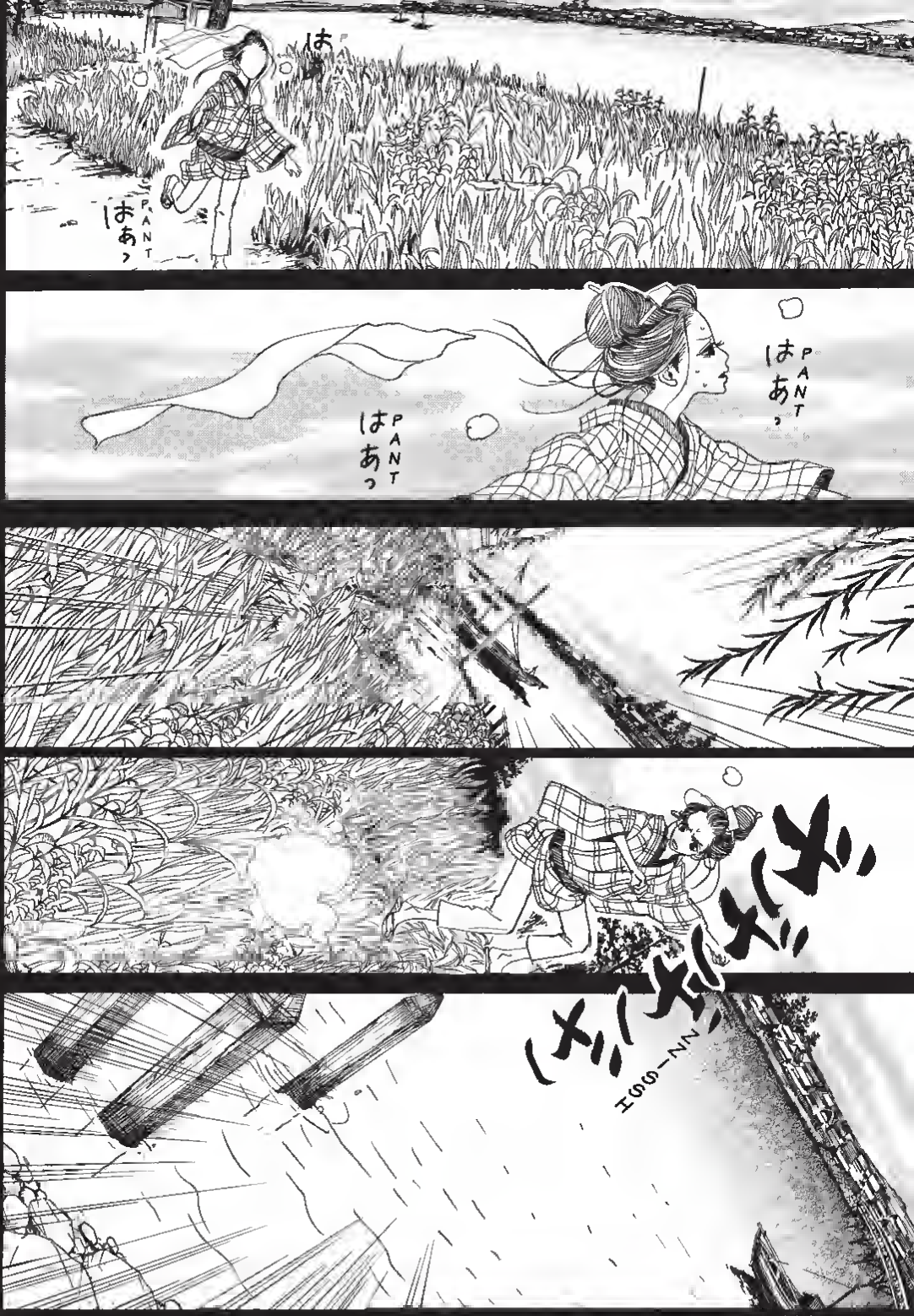
三松屋
HERE IT IS.
MIMA-TSUYA.
MY LEGS ARE NUMB, MY THROAT IS PARCHED. COUNTLESS PEOPLE HAVE EYED ME SUSPICIOUSLY.
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN STANDING HERE?
KAW KAW
I ARRIVED BEFORE NOON.
NOW IT'S NEAR DUSK.
SO...


KIYO-HA...
I DIDN'T CARE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTER I SAW HIS FACE, BUT...
WOULD HE CRY
OR TURN MONSTROUS?
I WANTED TO SEE HIS EXPRESSION.
MASTER SO...
I WANTED

OH ...

HE'S AN OGRE.


HM?
WHAT'S WRONG, YOUNG MASTER?
A SMILING OGRE.
I THOUGHT I SAW SOMEONE I KNEW.
BUT IT WASN'T HER.


はあっ
PANT
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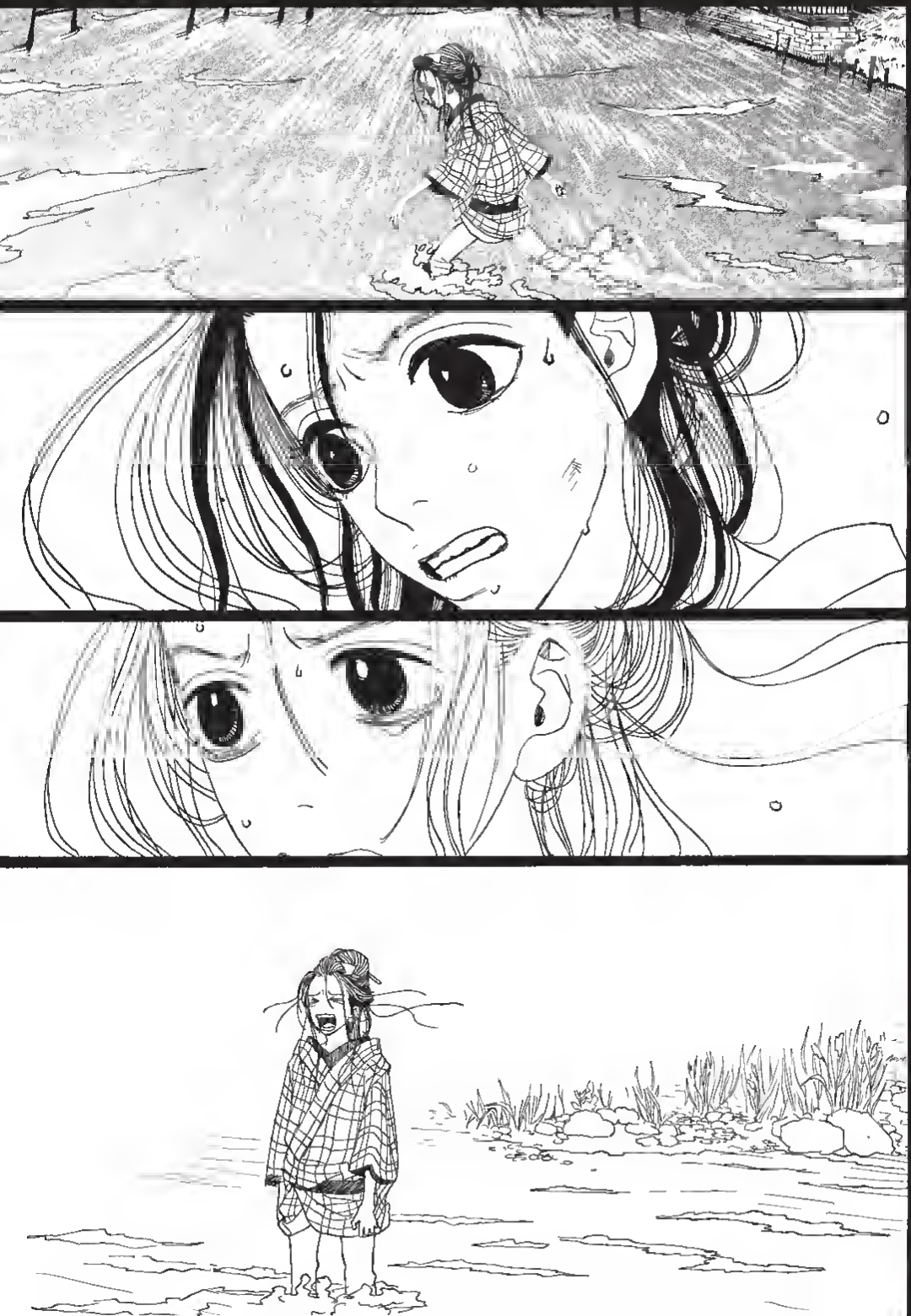
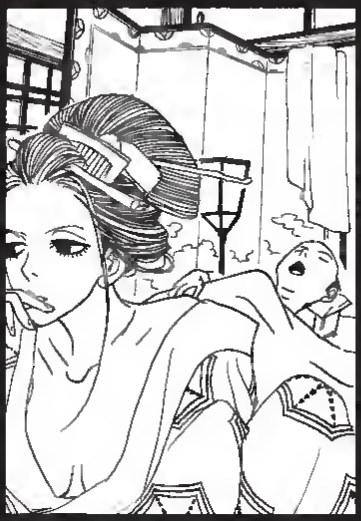


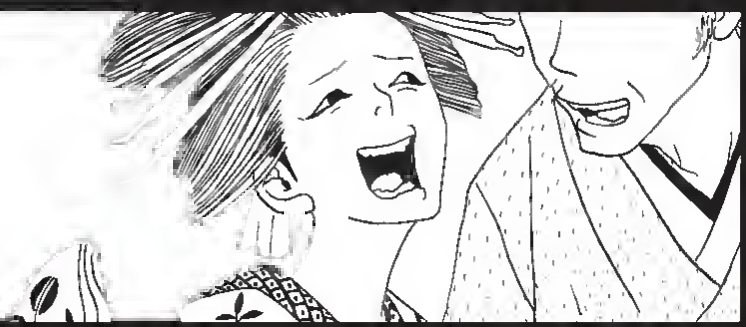
WHAT? IS THAT SUPPOSED TO HURT?

THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS OF TORTURE BY WATER AND FIRE.

THEY CAPTURED ME AND DRAGGED ME BACK.

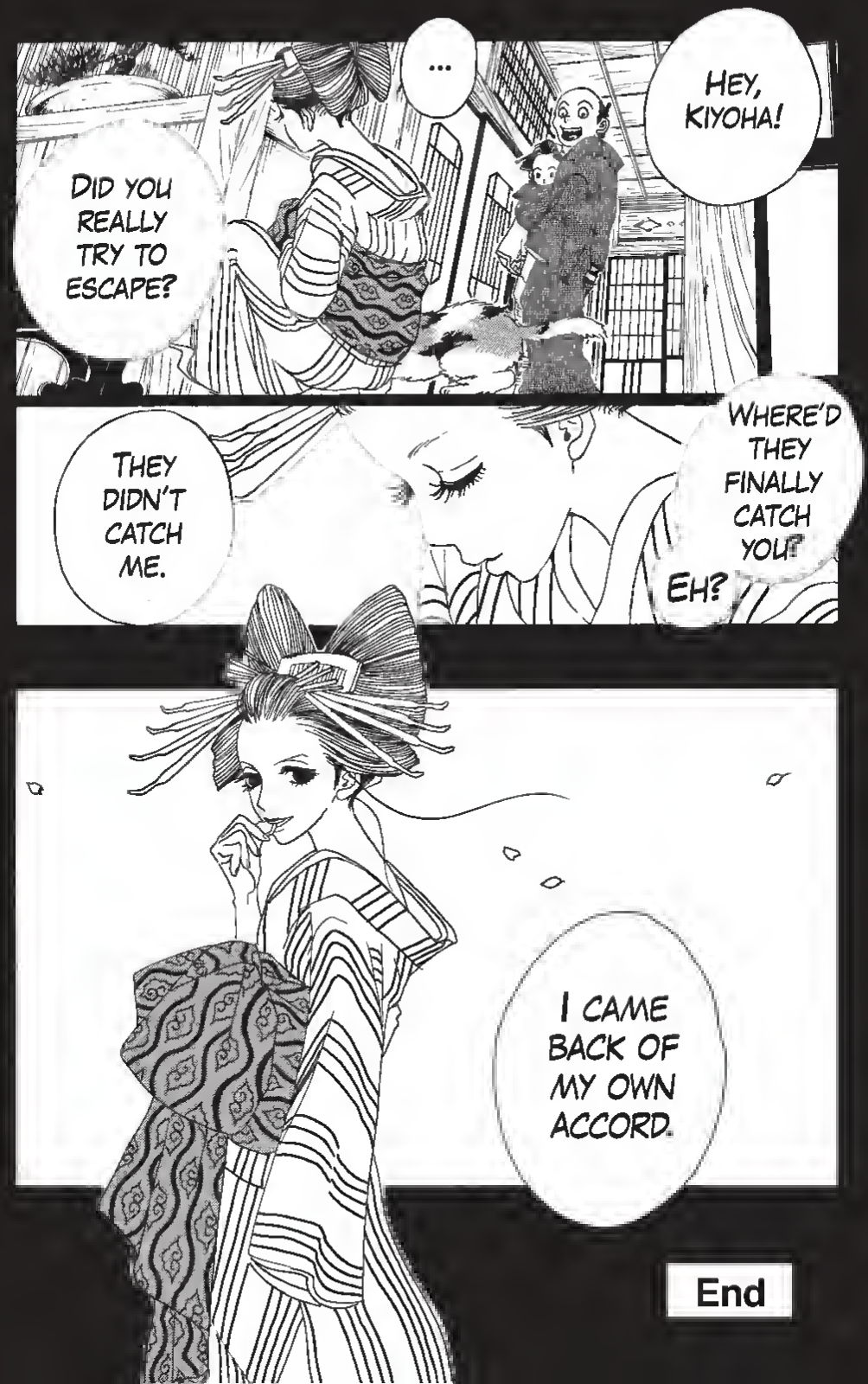


NO MATTER WHERE I'D GO, IT'D BE THE SAME.



JUST KNOWING THAT

WAS A GODSEND.


...
HEY, KIYOHA!
DID YOU REALLY TRY TO ESCAPE?
THEY DIDN'T CATCH ME.
WHERE'D THEY FINALLY CATCH YOU?
EH?
I CAME BACK OF MY OWN ACCORD.
End

ICH
ME.
EH?
I CAME
BACK OF
MY O

SAKURAN Translation notes

The title, sakuran, is a bit of a pun. The word *sakuran* by itself means "derangement" but the titular *sakuran* is an elision of *sakura* (cherry blossoms) and *oiran* (courtesan).

p. 5

Oiran: The word *oiran* is derived from the phrase *oira no tokoro no nee-san* (literally, "my elder sister") used by maids in the pleasure quarter to refer to elder courtesans. (This is seen on the first page.) *Oira no* was elided into *oiran* and was given the *ateji* (phonetic kanji characters) meaning "flower" and "leader" and came to be used in reference to high-ranking courtesans.

p. 8

*2 *bu* = about $300

**Zashiki-mochi* = Middle-rank courtesan with her own room

p. 30

Dochu = procession.

The top-ranking *oiran* of each house would set out in the evening and parade around the pleasure quarter. The *oiran* wore their finest *kimono* and very tall *geta* sandals, and would walk in a slow, elegant style with their feet tracing the shape up the number eight. The *oiran* would be accompanied by several maids wearing livery with the *oiran*'s name, a footman carrying a long-handled umbrella to shade the *oiran* from the elements and another footman holding her hand in support while she made the long, slow procession.

p. 108 and 127

shinzo = Novice courtesan who has just started working. *Shinzo* literally translates to "newly built."

p. 218

Zashiki-mochi hirusan = High-end (but not top-rank) courtesan with her own parlor for guests

p. 242

Tayuu=Top-rank courtesan

Sakuran: Blossoms Wild

Production: Glen Isip
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BLOSSOMS WILD

In **Sakuran**, Moyoco Anno lifts the veil on life in the Edo-period pleasure quarter, Yoshiwara. The story follows Kiyoha, sold into a brothel as a child and forced to work as a maid and her rise to prominence as one of the top-ranking courtesans in Yoshiwara. The allure of the "flower and willow world" as it was called by artists in the day is underscored with the very real tragedy, heartbreak and difficult lives led by those seemingly glamorous courtesans. Will Kiyoha's fox-like wiles give her a chance to break free of her gilded cage? Or will her fighting spirit ruin her chances of ever escaping the brothel?

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